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OPINION METER
This week's poll:

Do you intend to sign the petition to place the question of Saipan casino legalization on the Nov. 6 ballot?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

NATION

Today, over a third of U.S. adults are obese. By 2030, 42 percent will be.

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WORLD

Who won Mexico's presidential debate? A curvaceous model in a tight gown.

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LIFE & STYLE

At home with Nobel laureate Toni Morrison.

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Senators kill Article 12 initiative

»Popular initiative group continues signature drive

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate overwhelmingly killed late afternoon yesterday a legislative initiative that would have placed the question of Article 12 on the Nov. 6 ballot, with only one of eight present senators voting "yes."

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Sex maniac on the loose in Dandan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A sex maniac on the loose is believed to be behind a series of sexual assaults on at least two young women and two girls in three separate incidents in Dandan.

Police officer Jason Tarkong said yesterday that investigators are eyeing the strong possibility that there is just one suspect, based on the descriptions given by the witnesses or victims.

Tarkong said the three sexual assault incidents happened on March 25 and 30, 2012, and April 2, 2012, all occurring around 4am inside homes in Dandan.

The NMI Crime Stoppers Program is seeking the community's assistance for information on these incidents, said Tarkong, who is also coordinator for the Crime Stoppers Program.

The latest incident on April 1, Sunday, occurred at about 4am when a 19-year-old woman was awakened when she felt someone trying to pull off her blanket. When she opened her eyes, she was surprised to see a male

See SEX on Page 4

Senate, retirees group CRA want Fund's bankruptcy filing junked

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate and the Commonwealth Retirees Association separately supported yesterday a move to withdraw the NMI Retirement Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition, echoing the U.S. Trustee and other retirees' request for the U.S. District Court for the NMI Bankruptcy Division to dismiss it.

The NMI Retirement Fund is the first public pension agency on U.S. soil to seek bankruptcy protection, serving as a litmus test for other troubled pension agencies worldwide.

By a vote of 8-0, the Senate adopted yesterday afternoon Senate Resolution 17-87, requesting the Fund to withdraw its Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition "pursuant to the U.S. Trustee's Motion to Dismiss Case."

SR 17-87, authored by Sens. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), Henry San Nicolas (Cov-Tinian), Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), and Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), was adopted along with another resolution that seeks to create a special commission to help find solu-

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MEN AT WORK HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Using a giant crane, Hanson Micronesia Cement Inc. employees and contractors do repair and maintenance work on a towering depot at the cement facility in Lower Base yesterday. For almost two years now, the Department of Commerce has not been releasing a CNMI quarterly economic indicators report that provides the volume of imports into the CNMI such as cement and fuel, constructions activities, bank deposits and loans, business gross revenues, and government spending and collection, among other things.

Mobil slashes gas prices by 10 cents on Saipan. **PAGE 3**
CNMI prevailing wage report finally completed. **PAGE 7**

Local

Upsolar touts solar energy plant for NMI

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An official of an international company specializing in solar power energy said yesterday that the high cost of power in the CNMI has slowed down the influx of foreign investors so that shifting to alternative energy will surely benefit the local economy.

Zhe Jiang, chief executive officer of Upsolar, said the these investors will be "much more comfortable" putting their money in the Commonwealth if the islands use solar power, positioning the Northern Marianas in "a very good direction."

"Islands will be very good for solar development," Jiang told *Saipan Tribune*.

Jiang and the rest of the Upsolar team were on island over the weekend to present their solar energy program to government and business leaders, seeking local partners that would allow them to initially establish a 5-megawatt solar power plant in the CNMI.

This system, Jiang said, will be parallel with the main grid of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. He said that CUC customers can avail of solar power in the daytime, then switch to CUC power at night.

A French national, Jiang presented his program to some 30 individuals at the Chamolinian Room of Hyatt Regency Saipan yesterday.

Jiang founded Upsolar in 2006 in Hong Kong. It has established itself as a leader in photovoltaic or PV technology solutions. Now headquartered in Shanghai, China, Upsolar has expanded internationally, serving clients in over 20 countries with its 10 offices on three continents.

In his presentation, Jiang underscored the benefits of a solar energy system, which he described as environment-friendly as it does not cause pollution and "significantly" reduces energy costs.

"This kind of system, once the initial investment is done, there's no variable cost to produce energy," he said.

Jiang said "almost a hundred percent" of the CNMI depend on fossil fuel for electricity. Price for this fuel, he noted, has increased by 3,300 percent in the last 30 years.

Besides eliminating pollution, a solar power plant has "foreseeable cost" of energy for 25 years with no major maintenance needed during the operations.

Its disadvantages, however, would be a "relatively" high investment upfront and the need for "specific know-how" in designing, building, and operating the solar power plant.

"Upsolar's Mariana Islands Program is to offer the advantage side of solar power to local partners," said Jiang. The local partners' role is to provide them with building rooftops or vacant lands to set up the solar panels. Upsolar and the property owners will have to sign a power purchase agreement or PPA "based on agreed electricity prices for 25 years."

Despite the CNMI's current economic downturn, Jiang believes that the islands can afford to have a solar power plant as the long-term investment will result in immediate energy bill savings, thus helping the local economy and encouraging investors to come in.

Jiang disclosed that they already built a solar power plant for an island near Africa through a local partner.

"I think it fits with the long-term development strategy of the government of the islands because people know that the fossil fuel energy is not sustainable. The only thing you know about that is that it increases every year," he added.

Jiang's team is expected to fly to Guam today and conduct a similar presentation.

For more information, visit www.upsolar.com.

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Mobil slashes gas prices by 10 cents on Saipan

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan motorists got a reprieve from the pump, albeit not as much as they want it to, when Mobil Oil Mariana Islands reduced its pump prices by 10 cents a gallon on Saipan at 3pm yesterday.

Regular unleaded gasoline on Saipan is now $5.059 a gallon, 10 cents down from a record high of $5.159 a gallon but still much higher than pump prices across the United States and its territories.

This means a worker on Saipan earning the minimum wage of $5.05 an hour needs to work an entire hour to be able to buy a gallon of regular gas.

Super unleaded gasoline is also down to $5.379 a gallon, from $5.479 a gallon.

Diesel on Saipan is now $5.419 a gallon, down from $5.519 a gallon.

The last time Mobil and Shell Marianas gas prices went up was in late February.

Pump prices at Shell service stations on Saipan remained unchanged as of press time yesterday. Mobil and Shell have historically mirrored each other's price changes.

Albina Lizama, a Capital Hill resident, said she's relieved that gas prices went down at a time when the CNMI is dealing with a lot of crises, including high power rates, work hour cuts, a pension agency that filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, and an under-funded public hospital.

"But I would be happier if gas prices went down by more than 10 cents. I wish gas price is only $4," Lizama told Saipan Tribune in an interview while she was buying gas at a Mobil service station in Garapan late yesterday afternoon.

She said every school day, she needs to drive and fetch two of her grandchildren to and from Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in San Roque to Capital Hill "because there's no school bus from Esco's to GTC."

"With the 10 cents, my gas could last a little longer," she added.

Alfredo Valdez, 67, also wishes for gas prices to go down further.

"Life is hard. We need as much cut in our spending as possible," he said as he was filling up his car with $10 gas at a Mobil station yesterday. Valdez, a resident of Chalan Kanoa, said his $10 gas lasts two days.

Since the start of the year, Saipan motorists have been paying 35 cents more for gas.

Mobil and Shell do not issue advance notices for any gas price change.

Mobil earlier said that prices of gasoline are determined by a number of factors, including changes in the world market wholesale prices of gasoline, regional gasoline supply and demand balance, transportation costs, insurance, local distribution, marketing costs, government regulations, taxes, competitive market forces, and investments in retail stations and distribution terminals.

Senate to Fitial: Don't wait for the last minute to submit board nominations

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Senators took turns yesterday afternoon urging Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to submit nominations to various boards and commissions at least 90 days before the expiration of terms and not wait for the last minute as has been the practice recently, including the case of members or nominees to the NMI Retirement Fund board of trustees.

The governor submitted to the Senate on April 30 his renomination of Fund board chair Bernadita C. Palacios and trustee Marian DLG. Tudela, just a few days before their terms expired on May 3 and 4.

Right now, the Fund does not have quorum after two members' terms expired last week, and Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) said the governor and the Fund board should take this seriously.

Fitial's renominations came a few days after he recalled the renomination of former Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar so he could re-appoint him. A Senate panel was poised to recommend rejecting Igisomar's nomination.

Sen. Juan Ayuyu (Ind-Rota) said that critical boards and commissions like the Retirement Fund lack quorum mainly because the governor does not nominate or renominate individuals to the board in a timely manner.

Ayuyu, during discussions on the governor's communication to the Senate, said the Senate has been blamed for delaying confirmation of the governor's nominations, when it should be the governor to be blamed for submitting nominations or renominations late.

"We ask the governor to submit 90 days before expiration," he said.

Cruz, chairman of the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations, as well as Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), echoed Ayuyu's request to the administration.

Press secretary Angel Demapan, when asked for comment, said yesterday that "while the governor strives to make appointments as early as possible, it is important to note that part of the process of submitting a nomination is the period of assessment of the potential nominees' qualifications and willingness to serve on the board."

"The irony at hand, though, is that when the EAGI elects to reject a nomination of the governor, the body resorts to either waiting for the eleventh hour or letting the nomination nullify itself by taking no action during the prescribed timeframe the committee is allotted to approve or disapprove," Demapan told *Saipan Tribune*.

He also said the submission of executive appointments to boards and commissions is a function of the Executive Branch. In turn, the action of whether to approve or disapprove executive appointments is a function of the EAGI committee of the Senate, he added.

Cruz also said the Fitial administration's appointees have not been promptly submitting the required documents to the EAGI panel, making it hard for the committee to make final recommendations to the full Senate to confirm or reject their nominations.

He said there were at least two vacancies in the Fund board for quite sometime, but the governor also waited for the last minute for re-appointments or replacements.

Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), for her part, asked the EAGI chairman to also provide committee members with all the documents submitted to the panel so that they could also review the nomination ahead of the public hearing.

Taimanao said if there are still documents not submitted, the EAGI chair should contact the nominees to remind them about the submission.

Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan) asked the EAGI Committee to complete its investigation on the nominees before holding a public hearing on their nomination.

Reyes also said the Senate should not reject individuals even before their names reach the Senate, citing a letter from a constituent. He said he is willing to discuss this with the committee on another time.

Last week, Fitial made five nominations and renominations—two to the Fund (Palacios and Tudela) and three to the Board of Professional Licensing, including Herman B. Cabrera, Candido I. Castro, and Roman S. Demapan.

DPS on the lookout for aggressive drivers

Acting Public Safety commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro would like to inform the public that the department will continue to enforce its Aggressive Driver Interdiction Program and immediately start its "Outreach Education Program" campaign.

The purpose of this campaign is to educate, deter, and detect aggressive drivers out on the streets.

"We must be vigilant in monitoring the streets in our community for other law abiding citizens. We must keep our streets and highways safe for all motorist and pedestrians," said Ogumoro.

ADIP will take effect immediately. All department units, including Patrol, Traffic, Boating Safety Unit, Criminal Investigative Bureau, and the Motor Carrier Safety Unit, will participate in this joint operation.

Ogumoro's mission is to deter and stop aggressive driving. DPS Patrol and traffic officers will conduct night enforcement and conduct mini-checkpoints to educate and ensure the safety of the public. ***(DPS)***

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Marines' arrivals pushed back to Friday

The arrival on Tinian of some 100 U.S. Marines from Japan that will take part in Exercise Geiger Fury 2012 has been pushed back to Friday instead of today, the Marine Forces Pacific Guam and CNMI said last night.

Lt. Col. Aisha Bakkar said the new arrival time is 7am Friday, May 11, adding that the schedule changes frequently because of weather conditions and refueling requirements.

The high-speed vessel carrying some 100 Marines will go back to Japan to fetch the rest, for a total of around 200 U.S. Marines taking part in the exercise, intended to allow Marine Aircraft Group-12 out of Japan "to improve aviation combat readiness and simulate operations in a deployed austere environment."

Geiger Fury could well be the biggest military training to occur on Tinian, decades after the island played a decisive role to end World War II. The island was the launching pad for the two atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan.

The May 14 to June 8 training on Tinian will be held simultaneously with training in Guam involving some 700 personnel.

Geiger Fury 2012 will be conducted on both West and North Fields on Tinian in the CNMI, while Aviation Training Relocation will be conducted at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

Jury trial in immigration fraud case begins

A federal jury trial began yesterday in the case of a woman who is facing immigration fraud charges.

Chief Judge Ramona Manglona was still selecting the members of the jury when *Saipan Tribune* left the U.S. District Court at 4:30pm.

Liwen Tang is charged with two counts of immigration document fraud. She appeared with court-appointed counsel Colin Thompson. Former police officer Christopher Leon Guerrero is assisting Thompson as a private investigator.

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth R. Backe is prosecuting the case.

According to the indictment, Tang lied in her application to register permanent residence or adjust status with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

She allegedly claimed that her only child was her daughter born in 2006 when in fact she also gave birth to a son in April 2002 whose biological father was listed on the child's birth certificate as Abdullah al Mamun. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

ARTICLE

From Page 1

Article 12 of the NMI Constitution restricts land ownership in the CNMI only to persons of Northern Marianas descent, or NMDs.

Of the eight senators present during the re-scheduled session, only Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), the author of Senate Legislative Initiative 17-10, voted "yes."

Five voted "no," one abstained and one voted "present." One senator was absent.

The five who voted "no" were Sens. Henry San Nicolas (Cov-Tinian), Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), Ralph Torres (R-Saipan), Juan Ayuyu (Ind-Rota), and Luis Crisostimo (Ind-Saipan).

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) abstained, while Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan) voted "present." Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian) is on medical leave.

Before voting, senators took turns making their case in voting against the repeal Article 12 in its entirety. They said, however, that they're open to the idea of making amendments to some of its provisions.

Manglona later told *Saipan Tribune* he's surprised with the result.

One senator said the result is not a rebuke to the initiative's author, but because they felt retaining Article 12 would do more good than harm.

Observers on Capital Hill said yesterday that the defeat of SLI 17-10 only goes to show that any legislative initiative to change Article 12 will not pass the Legislature.

Passage of a legislative initiative by the Senate and House does not mean repealing or retaining Article 12, but will only ensure that the question would be placed on the ballot.

Just the same, senators opposed to SLI 17-10 said they do not want Article 12 abolished.

San Nicolas, in an interview after the session, said he believes Article 12 should be retained to protect future generations.

"As a parent, I feel that Article 12 will protect the future generations. Unlike other countries with big lands, the CNMI only has small islands. If we allow non-NMDs to buy, we might just be like Hawaii and Guam where I think the locals don't have land in their own land," he said.

San Nicolas said there are other ways to improve the economy, if only elected leaders work together to implement plans.

Torres, for his part, said he supports only amending some portions of Article 12 but not abolishing it in its entirety. He said he is open to amending the blood quantum provision and addressing concerns about adoption.

"I am protecting the future generations because land does not grow," he later told *Saipan Tribune*.

This was the same sentiment that Ayuyu raised during the session. Ayuyu said there is a need to balance concerns about Article 12 of the Constitution and the law on adoption.

Under Article 12, an individual with less than 25 percent NMD blood won't be able to own land in the CNMI. However, an adopted minor child with no NMD blood at all—a child from China or the Philippines, for example—is considered 100 percent NMD.

"A .10 percent NMD blood versus adopted child. For me, it's not right…My decision is to balance it," said Ayuyu, adding that he supports amending Article 12 but not abolishing it.

Taimanao and Crisostimo separately said they support instead a pending legislative initiative to extend the existing 55-year lease to 99 years, to help grow the economy. Crisostimo is author of such initiative.

A House legislative initiative pending in the Senate seeks to change the 25 percent or one-quarter blood quantum requirement to only "at least some degree" of Chamorro or Carolinian blood or a combination of these, in order to be considered a person of Northern Marianas descent. Some senators said they are more open to approving it.

Popular initiative

While a legislative initiative to place Article 12 on the ballot is dead at least for now, there is still a "popular initiative" to place it on the ballot.

The Citizens for Change of Article 12, or CCART 12 led by chair Efrain F. Camacho, continues to gather voters' signatures to be placed on the ballot.

CCART 12 is currently circulating a petition to have the question placed on the ballot during the midterm election for the public to vote whether to retain Article 12 or repeal it.

But the group's end goal is to have Article 12 abolished or repealed in its entirety, saying that instead of protecting NMDs, it is disenfranchising them, among other things.

The group still has lots of signatures to gather to meet their target of at least 8,000 signatures, just to be on the safe side.

CCART 12 said it's only a misconception that NMDs will lose their culture or NMDs will become landless if Article 12 is repealed.

"NMDs are already becoming landless as sales are rampant due to poor economic conditions," they said.

They added that current NMDs are already losing their land because of the blood quantum requirement. They said future generations will lose their right to own or inherit land from their parents if blood quantum continues to be diluted.

Many NMDs are marrying outside the Chamorro/Carolinian bloodline. Several NMDs are now only 25 percent NMD and most likely will be marrying non-NMDs.

"So how is Article 12 protecting an NMD that is less than 25 percent bloodline?" they asked.

CCART12 said it's a misconception that few NMDs will get rich.

"Now, only few buyers can control sale price. Repeal of Article 12 will pass value directly to owner," they said.

Diego Blanco, who strongly supports retaining Article 12, separately said yesterday that "Article 12 was established to protect NMDs now and in the future."

"Why would anyone want to remove that protection? What is wrong about protecting NMDs?" he asked.

Section 805 of the Covenant allows the CNMI to revisit its land alienation restrictions 25 years after the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement in 1986. That 25-year period ended in 2011.

The Covenant established the political relationship between the United States and the Northern Marianas.

SEX

From Page 1

figure standing over her and looking down at her.

The girl screamed, prompting the suspect to run out the door. Family members were awakened and discovered that the suspect gained entry by breaking into the bathroom window.

The girl described the suspect as about 5'5" tall, medium built, and his head was covered with a brown T-shirt.

On March 25, a Sunday and also around 4am, a 16-year-old girl woke up to a male person leaning over her and kissing her on the lips. The girl alerted family members and the suspect fled the area. She described the suspect as wearing a jacket with a hoodie over his head, covering his face.

On March 30, Friday, also at 4am, an unidentified person broke into a house in Upper Dandan and sexually assaulted two girls, both minors.

The father of one of the girls woke up around 4am to the screams of his daughter and her female friend coming from their bedroom. The father ran to the bedroom and found the girls crouched in a corner.

Police investigation showed that as the girls were sleeping, they felt someone touching them improperly. One of the girls screamed, prompting the suspect to run out the door and house.

The father checked the house and discovered that the suspect's point of entry was through a window where the screen had been cut open.

The girls described the suspect's face as covered with a piece of cloth. The suspect was described as possibly a local male, about 5'5" tall, with very short hair and slim body.

Tarkong said the Department of Public Safety and Crime Stoppers need the public's help for the arrest of the suspect. Contact the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272 should you want to remain anonymous or use our website at www.nmicrimestoppers.net. Crime Stoppers pays up to $1,000 for any information leading to an arrest.

SENATE

From Page 1

tions to the Fund crisis.

In a meeting last night, the Commonwealth Retirees Association voted to support dismissal of the bankruptcy filing. CRA director and former representative Diego Benavente offered the motion.

"Our alternative to bankruptcy filing is recommending that parties involved and the government work together to address the Fund's problems," Benavente told *Saipan Tribune* last night.

The Senate, as well as CRA, called for the creation of a special commission composed of the Fund, the Legislature, the Fitial administration, and active and retired members of the Fund "to work collaboratively to rehabilitate the Retirement Fund."

Senators and CRA both cited the U.S. Trustee's filing on Friday to dismiss the bankruptcy petition.

Assistant U.S. Trustee Curtis Ching said the Fund's structure and statutory existence makes it clear that it is a "governmental unit" of the CNMI. Under Title 11, a debtor must be a "person" in order to be eligible to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and may not be a "governmental unit."

"As such, the [Fund] cannot be a "person" for purposes of Title 11 and is therefore ineligible to be a Chapter 11 debtor. This case must therefore be dismissed," Ching said in a 14-page motion.

The U.S. Trustee, a component of the U.S. Department of Justice, protects the integrity of the bankruptcy system by overseeing case administration and litigation to enforce bankruptcy laws.

Accusations

The Senate also adopted a resolution objecting to lawmakers who now want to go back to receiving their salary as legislators after waiving it to receive their retirement benefits instead.

Manglona's Senate Resolution 17-86 was adopted only after an exchange of words between Manglona and Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (Ind-Saipan), apparently the only one affected by the resolution.

In a prepared two-page statement, Reyes said he is extremely honored that Manglona found the time and effort to craft up a resolution in Reyes' honor.

"It really is not necessary and you probably know that the resolution is useless and unenforceable," Reyes said.

Reyes said Manglona could have drafted instead a bill that will prevent future abuse of public funds, including one that will make it illegal to create two subsistence allowances for members of the Legislature.

Reyes said that during his tenure as Senate president, Manglona came up with a scheme to appropriate funds from the Rota Legislative Delegation and assigned expenditure to Reyes. He said the scheme was intended to avoid discovery that Manglona set up another subsistence allowance account for himself and others in the delegation.

Manglona said that Reyes could take this up with the Office of the Public Auditor if he wants.

Hearing set on US Trustee's motion to dismiss

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Bankruptcy Division designated judge Robert J. Faris granted yesterday the U.S. Trustee's request to immediately hear its motion to have the NMI Retirement Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition dismissed.

In a one-page order, Faris said the hearing will be held on June 1, 2012, at 9:30am.

In the Trustee's request to shorten the notice of the hearing period filed yesterday, Assistant U.S. Trustee Curtis Ching cited that a hearing on certain creditors' motion to dismiss has already been set for June 1, 2012.

"The [U.S.] Trustee believes this threshold issue should be determined promptly before the case proceeds further," Ching said.

The U.S. Trustee, Ching said, will provide at least 21 days' notice of the hearing by mail to the parties required to be served.

Ching further asked for authority to provide notice of the hearing by publication in the *Saipan Tribune* "or other equivalent tribunal" for a period of one week.

Ching filed the motion to dismiss the bankruptcy petition over the weekend.

Ching echoed the position of attorney Bruce Jorgensen's unnamed clients that the Fund's structure and statutory existence makes it clear that it is a "governmental unit" of the CNMI.

Two retirees and members of the NMI Retirement Fund are also joining the move to dismiss the Fund's Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition.

Joaquin Q. Atalig and Jesus I. Taisague, through counsel Ramon K. Quichocho, submitted Monday a notice of joinder to a motion to dismiss filed earlier by the two unnamed retirees.

Quichocho said his clients join Jane Roe and John Doe (unnamed retirees), who are represented by attorney Jorgensen's group, in seeking the dismissal of the Fund's Chapter 11 petition, because the Fund does not meet Chapter requirements.

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DCCA eyes study to decide on Garapan Street Market site

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs is planning to do a comparative analysis between two possible locations for the Garapan Street Market, an open market held every Thursday that is popular among tourists and community residents.

DCCA Secretary Melvin Faisao said yesterday that the study will determine whether the Street Market will remain at Coral Tree Avenue or at its temporary site at the Garapan Fishing Base.

The agency relocated the weekly event to the Garapan Fishing Base since April 12, a week after a dilapidated sewer line on Coral Street collapsed. The collapsed pipe is located between two manholes fronting the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan and Hyatt Regency Saipan.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. contracted the services of GPPC, Inc. to install new pipes, initially projected to take three to four weeks.

GPPC's Marshall Liban disclosed in a separate phone interview that they received the notice to proceed with the project on April 6 and they started mobilizing their employees the very next day.

"Since it was an emergency sewer repair project, we worked 24 hours instead of the normal eight to 12 hours. We wanted to finish on time but we actually finished ahead of schedule," said Liban.

According to him, Coral Tree Avenue was officially opened to motorists on April 19. "We came back on April 21 just to test the pipe if there is any leak. There was none," he said.

Liban noted that they were informed by CUC that the contract for the project, which has a price tag of $118,500, is now en route.

Although Liban and CUC executive director Abe Utu Malae separately confirmed the completion of the project, Faisao said they have yet to be informed by the utilities agency about it.

"Right now, we are still waiting for CUC to inform us when the project is completed but in the meantime, we're assessing our relocated area if we are to permanently stay there," Faisao told *Saipan Tribune*.

According to Faisao, they have unconfirmed information from business owners along Coral Tree Avenue, who are "very happy" that the Street Market is no longer held in their area since it causes traffic and that customers do not buy from them and instead buy from the Street Market vendors.

Faisao pointed out, too, that the Coral Tree Avenue area is "so congested" and has "very limited" space that it cannot accommodate as many people as Garapan Fishing Base, which has more parking space.

As for the Street Market vendors, about 80 percent of them "expressed their intent and desire to remain permanently at the Garapan Fishing Base," said Faisao.

He said he wants to ensure that the views of all vendors will be taken into consideration and that fairness applies to all. To achieve this, Faisao said he needs to check with handicraft or souvenir vendors and their sales since the Street Market's original location is near hotels where tourists who stay there make up a majority of their customers.

If and when they move the Street Market permanently to the Garapan Fishing Base, Faisao said they will have to invite more tourists to the new site. The help of the Marianas Visitors Authority and an awareness campaign will result in more tourists checking out the Street Market, he added.

Faisao said that DCCA also wants to find out if it will incur additional costs should it decide to move the Street Market to a new location. Presently, the agency only spends about $700 for Street Market expenses such as tents and trash services.

Tree trimming clears view of Saipan lagoon

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Motorists driving by the Beach Road now have a better view of traffic lights and the Saipan Lagoon after the Mayor's Office began trimming the lower branches of trees planted along the island's main thoroughfare.

Mayor Donald G. Flores said yesterday the project began about a week ago, starting from north to south of Beach Road.

"This trimming project is part of the improvement and beautification efforts here on island," Flores told *Saipan Tribune*. "With tourism as our main industry, it is only appropriate that we showcase what we have and let our tourists realize how beautiful our island is."

According to Flores, tourists pass by the popular Beach Road on their way to their hotels or to the airport "so it's important that we maintain it."

Trimming the overgrown flame trees is already one way to have a "pretty improvement" on the island, he added.

The mayor disclosed that since they started the project, they have already received many positive feedbacks not only from visitors through their tour guides but also from island residents themselves.

"We need to do every little nice thing that we can to improve our island as a tourist destination," added Flores.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

The trees along Beach Road, like those seen here by the Microl Toyota intersection in San Jose, now have a new trimmed look, thanks to a tree-trimming project undertaken by the Saipan Mayor's Office.

MVA targets residents in awareness campaign

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Many of the Marianas Visitors Authority's events in May are intended to raise public awareness and educate island residents of the importance of tourism in the CNMI, according to MVA community projects manager Martin Duenas.

"Our focus for the past two years has been public awareness, public tourism educational activities and projects," Duenas said yesterday.

Duenas was the guest speaker during a regular meeting of the Rotary Club of Saipan yesterday at Hyatt Regency Saipan's Giovanni's Restaurant.

He discussed with the Rotary, among other things, at least five projects for the month of May: the Hafa Adai Tirow Spirit Island Wear Fridays, Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival and Beer Garden, My Marianas Outreach Presentation, On-the-Street Interviews, and the Radio Tourism Trivia.

Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos recently proclaimed the month of May as "CNMI Tourism Month," with the theme "Tourism is Everybody's Business."

"Basically Tourism Month is [raising] awareness [for] locals," Duenas said.

Duenas said the Taste of the Marianas basically targets tourists but local residents also patronize the event.

The other events are pretty much local awareness programs, said Duenas, citing the On-the-Street Interviews and the Radio Tourism Trivia.

"It's a matter of instilling in the community the importance of tourism, historical data, [and] information about tourism," he said.

Duenas said when people have knowledge about the tourism, they will appreciate and respect the industry, then contribute on their part to help enhance and promote the CNMI destination.

"That's the message that go with all these programs that we want to convey," he added.

SOPHIA-FIESTA
Fun Walk
Saturday, May 12, 2012
Registration opens: 6:00 a.m. Start Time: 6:30 a.m.
Starting point Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan
5K and 10K
Registration fee of $10 includes: *Goody bag w/some give-away
* SOPHIA-Fiesta 2012 T-Shirt * Souvenir pin * raffle ticket for door prizes
* light breakfast & entertainment.
Cash prizes awarded to Male & Female Oldest Walker;
Youngest Walker and the Best in Costume.
Advance Registration may be done at Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.
Contact PDI Hiroko (287-8780) MVA Hiroko (483-0614) or Elena (234-6412 Ext. 1512)
MWA Marianas Walking Association
Tan Holdings
FIESTA Resort & SPA SAIPAN
SGH Saipan Grand Hotel
PDI PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT INC.
KKMP
DFS GALLERIA
Saipan Tinian Rota See My Marianas
Coca-Cola Coke

CNMI prevailing wage report is finally completed

In response to the lack of statewide prevailing wage rates for the different occupations in the CNMI and the need to have rates that mirror the actual going wage rates on the islands, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos announced yesterday the completion and release of the first part of the CNMI Prevailing Wage Workforce Assessment Study.

The study will be uploaded and may be accessed beginning today, May 9, 2012, through the Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.gov.mp.

This release is the Prevailing Wage section and it includes the types of occupations that exist in the CNMI. It measures the occupation-specific wage rates for each of the identified occupations as of October 2011. This report lists the 523 individual occupation titles found in the study and shows the average hourly wage rate and other relevant descriptive statistics for each occupation title. Also shown are the same statistics at the different levels of aggregation according to the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification. Together, these statistics aim to fulfill the requirement of U.S. Public Law 110-229 or the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008.

"I am a firm believer in data, data, data. My office is excited to see this published as this may be the first of its kind in the CNMI that provides details on occupation titles, wage statistics, average hourly wage rate (mean and median) sorted out by islands, major industry group, major occupation group, and by basic demographics including gender, age, citizenship, and ethnicity," said Edith Deleon Guerrero, WIA executive director.

Press secretary Angel Demapan also stated that, "although the Saipan Chamber of Commerce initially released a study last year, this comprehensive report encompasses a broader

ON THE NET
www.commerce.gov.mp

population base and focused not only on the prevailing wage but also on the workforce assessment that should be released by end of this month. This is a two-part study that will report on what we've come to call the 'prevailing wage,' while the second part that will capture 'workforce assessment study' will be forthcoming."

Many individual efforts from businesses, organizations, and offices combined to complete this study.

The CNMI business community provided the necessary data, which made this study possible. The study enumerators visited a total of 1,806 businesses, autonomous agencies, private schools, and other organizations; 1,486 responded; and 1,201 reported employee data to the Prevailing Wage Workforce Assessment Study. Business organizations including the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the Korean Business Association encouraged their members to participate in the study.

Demapan

Government agencies—notably the Department of Finance, the Workforce Investment Agency, and the Department of Labor—contributed tremendously. Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson and her staff provided the comprehensive list of establishments doing business or providing services in the Commonwealth, which the study used in its data collection effort. Finance also provided the data on occupation, wages, and fringe benefits on government employees. The director of the Workforce Investment Agency, Edith Deleon Guerrero, Labor Secretary Gil San Nicolas, and their staff were involved in the study from the beginning and provided valuable reviews and inputs from the development of the questionnaire to the final report.

Phillip M. Doyle, Assistant Commissioner, and staff, from the Office of Compensation Levels and Trends, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, also provided invaluable reviews and comments on the questionnaire, the initial draft reports, and the final report. In addition, Dr. Michael J. Levin copy-edited the final report.

Central Statistics Office, under the then Directorship of Ivan A. Blanco and later Perry Inos, at the Department of Commerce, was responsible for the development and implementation of the wage study. Justin Andrew, Fermin Sakisat, and Brenda Rideb took charge of the hiring, training, and supervising the data collection, data entry, and data cleaning. Ten enumerators—Singeru Sugiyama, Bernard Taitano, Marian Tudela, Dominica Tebuteb, Kimberly Ann Diaz, Carmelisa Tebuteb, Sheila Perez, Yubert Alepuyo, John Hosono, and Ketson "Zack" Kabiriel were hired as temporary employees under CSD and managed the data collection on Saipan; two enumerators—Agida Quitugua and Flora Castro—managed the data collection on Rota; and two enumerators—Vicenta San Nicolas and Marthonia Borja—managed the data collection on Tinian. Resident directors Bill Hocog and Joe Kiyoshi of Commerce on Tinian and Rota assisted CSD on logistical support during the data collection phase from those two islands. Four data clerks—Jesusa Helgen, Ignacio Teregeyo, Memorina Olopai, and Sylvia Torres—reviewed the field-incoming forms, coded, and keyed data into the computer and assisted in the data cleaning process.

Wil Maui served as a consultant for the wage study. Maui assisted in the different phases of the study, produced and analyzed the statistics, and prepared this report.

"We extend our gracious appreciation to the private businesses and government agencies who participated in the CNMI Prevailing Wage and Workforce Assessment, which included around 2,340 establishments," said Fitial and Inos.

Commerce Secretary Sixto Igisomar added: "Their voluntary participation has produced the CNMI's first PWWAS State sanctioned report, which will assist policy makers in improved planning for the CNMI's workforce." ***(PR)***

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- Relevant experience in the daycare and pre-school sector necessary.
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FOA stages 'Sleuth' for MHS students

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Friends of the Arts is bringing its latest production, *Sleuth*, to Marianas High School students to teach them how to appreciate theater.

FOA's Harold Easton, who directed *Sleuth*, said a hundred ninth to tenth graders at MHS watched the play yesterday, with another hundred more expected to watch it today.

"It was kind of a last-minute thing, but we decided to offer it to MHS students because it was shown here," Easton said in a phone interview.

Easton emphasized that the idea behind this initiative is "to use theater as an educational tool."

"Instead of reading a play and talk about it, they see a play and talk about it," he added.

According to Easton, doing this is "not an unusual thing in educational theater but it's unusual out here."

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Leo Goode, left, and Bernard Rivera star in the Friends of the Arts production, Sleuth, which will be used as an educational tool for Marianas High School students.

"We decided to give it a dry run and it's something we want to promote within the Friends of the Arts next year," he added.

Easton noted, however, that the educational theater concept would be possible only if it involves a small play. It would also depend on the cast if they can get off work and do the show during the students' classes.

Easton, who teaches at MHS, said the students will also get the opportunity on Thursday morning to talk to the actors "both as a character and as an actor."

Staged at the MHS Dolphin Theatre from May 4 to 6, *Sleuth* stars Leo Goode as Andrew Wyke, "a master of games" with a passion for detective fiction writing, and Bernard Rivera as Milo Tindle, a Jewish-Italian enterprising businessman in the travel industry.

Sleuth culminated FOA's 2011 to 2012 season.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday greetings going out to Jerry Escota! We wish you good health and more blessings to come. We love you so much! Greetings come from your loving family and friends.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

OAG Civil Division moves to temporary location

Due to ongoing repairs, the Office of the Attorney General wishes to inform the public that its Civil Division (Capital Hill office) has temporarily moved to the Exhibit Hall of the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture right next to the Capital Hill Post Office. During this period, members of the public who require the services of the OAG's Civil Division are advised to visit their temporary office or contact them at telephone number 664-2341 and fax number 664-2349. ***(PR)***

John Gonzales LIVE schedule

John Gonzales LIVE on Wednesday, May 9, 2012, will feature the topic "**NMIRF officials tell all: The future of retirement pension in the NMI," with guests** Fund administrator Richard S. Villagomez and the Fund's legal and management team.

The program airs from 6:30pm to 7:30pm on KMCV Channel 14 and rebroadcasts on Monday and Tuesday the following week. John Gonzales LIVE also rebroadcasts on Betelnut Radio (www.betelnutradio.com) at 6pm Pacific Standard Time and 9pm Eastern Standard Time (Thursday, May 10 at 11am Chamorro Standard Time).

Next week, John Gonzales LIVE will feature the topic "Revenue Generating Measure(s)," with guests House Speaker Eli D. Cabrera and Vice Speaker Felicidad T. Ogumoro. It will air live on May 16, 2012, and rebroadcasts on May 21 and 22, all from 6:30pm to 7:30pm on KMCV Channel 14.

Viewers can participate by calling (287-4230), texting (285-META) (6382), OR emailing (johngonzaleslive@gmail.com). ***(PR)***

Free business workshops

The CNMI Small Business Development Center, in partnership with the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, will be hosting the following free workshops:

■ **How to start a business:** May 11, 2012; June 8, 2012. Time: 1:30pm to 3:30pm.

■ **How to write a business plan:** May 18, 2012; June 15, 2012. Time: 1:30pm to 3:30pm.

■ **How to apply for a bank loan:** May 4, 2012; May 25, 2012; June 22, 2012. Time: 1:30pm to 3:30pm.

■ **How to market your business outside the CNMI**: May 7, 2012. Time: 9am to 11am. June 1, 2012; June 29, 2012. Time: 1:30pm to 3:30pm.

All workshops will be held at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce conference room on the first floor of the Familia Building in Garapan, Saipan. Deadline for pre-registration is 12pm, one day before the workshop. For more information contact Ralph or Linda at 664-3018. ***(PR)***

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INVITATION FOR BIDS
CPA-IFB-002-12

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA") calls for bids to furnish one new 2012 4X4, V-6, gas, SUV vehicle.

1. The bid specifications contained in the Vehicle Bid Form provide in detail the CPA's requirements for the vehicle. Vehicle Bid Forms are available at the CPA Administrative Office, second floor of the Arrival Terminal, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950. You may contact telephone number 237-6500 for assistance.
2. Each bid shall be made on the Vehicle Bid Form furnished by the CPA.
3. The bid amount shall include the furnishing of all labor, supervision, equipment, supplies, transportation, taxes, fees, and all other items necessary to perform the work and services requested.
4. Bid documents must be received in a sealed envelope clearly labeled with "VEHICLE BID" and the name of the Bidder printed on the outside of the envelope. Bids submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission or by email will not be considered. Any bids received after the bid submittal deadline specified below shall be returned to the bidder unopened.
5. Bids shall be submitted at the CPA Administration Office located at the Saipan International Airport, second floor of the Arrival Terminal, no later than 2:00p.m. on May 23rd, 2012.
6. Bids will be publicly opened on May 29th, 2012 at the hour of 10:00a.m. in the Executive Director's conference room, second floor of the Arrival Terminal, Saipan International Airport, and there read aloud and recorded. All interested bidders are invited to attend.
7. The successful bidder will be required to furnish vehicle meeting the Bid Specifications within 60 days of receipt of payment from the CPA.
8. This acquisition is funded from a 2009 Ports Security Grant from Homeland Security and FEMA.

/s/ EDWARD M. DELEON GUERRERO
Executive Director

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Board of Trustees
Public Notice - Special Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT that the Board of Trustees of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation will hold a special meeting at 2:00 p.m. Thursday, May 10, 2012 at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation Conference Room #3, Lower Navy Hill, Saipan to consider the following agenda. Public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
A. Call to Order
B. Roll Call
II. REVIEW & ADOPTION OF AGENDA
III. REVIEW & ADOPTION OF MINUTES
IV. NEW BUSINESS
A. Employee Housing
B. FY 2012-13 Budget
C. Cost Cutting Initiatives
D. Review of ICS Contract
E. Review of SB 17-80
F. Hospital Emergency Contingency Plan Update
G. MPLT Line of Credit Review
H. Review of MIAP and Certified Public Expenditure
I. Senior Management Reports
V. MISCELLANEOUS
A. Next Meeting
B. Adjournment

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

May 9, 2000

Teno says no to proposal to create PCB task force

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has nixed a proposal by the Legislature to create a local task force to look into the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination in Tanapag, saying that issues surrounding the problem are currently being addressed by his administration. But he invited representatives from each chamber to work closely with a local working group tasked with responding to its adverse impact on public health and environment to get lawmakers' input and recommendations. The group comprises the Department of Public Health, the Division of Environmental Quality and community representatives of Tanapag, which work hand in hand with federal agencies.

House OKs bill outlining qualifications for AG

The House of Representatives yesterday passed a Senate proposal laying down qualifications for the CNMI's Attorney General aimed at updating earlier laws that set the requirements for the position. The AG appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate must be a resident of the Commonwealth, a graduate of law school accredited by the American Bar Association and a member of the CNMI Bar for at least three years before his or her appointment. These are among the amendments made to existing statutes governing the AG post under Senate Bill 12-24 offered by Sen. Edward U. Maratita.

May 9, 2001

NMHC saves over $1.18M from debt pact with MPLT

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation's restructured debt service agreement with the Marianas Public Land Trust is projected to result in savings of more than $1.18 million a month. The money saved is equivalent to the financing of at least one new home a month and if the relief is calculated for the 10-year period of the debt moratorium, NMHC stands to benefit from close to $12 million in additional funding from the MPLT. This was made possible by the implementation of Public Law 12-27, which granted an appropriation of MPLT's future distributions to the General Fund to be used to repay the housing agency's loan.

NLRB speaks to HR society

The Commonwealth's chapter of the Society of Human Resource Management, the CNMI's professional personnel organization, will be holding its monthly membership meeting on May 10 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Judith Anderson, board agent and attorney, will be special guest speaker at this month's meeting. Ms. Anderson will discuss with the SHRM members and guests the role of the NLRB, protected actions of employees, and how rights of union employees have recently been extended to non-union employees with regard to employer investigations of employee misconduct.

May 9, 2002

CUC helping workers with trapped paychecks at BoS

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Bernard P. Villagomez said his management is assisting the 28 employees who did not get their salaries Friday last week because their payroll was directly deposited to the Bank of Saipan get their paychecks. "CUC employees affected by the Bank of Saipan's temporary closure requested that we release their next paycheck now," said Villagomez in a report to the CUC Board. "These checks are being processed to assist the employees." He said, though, that the checks would not translate to payroll advances, which are not normally allowed by the utility firm. "This is money that they've already earned, not cash advances." Villagomez was not available for clarification yesterday.

SNILD passes $1.08M supplemental budget

A bill that appropriates $1.08 million from fees collected under Saipan Local Law 11-2 now goes to Gov. Juan N. Babauta after the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative delegation passed the bill during yesterday's session. The measure was intended to supplement the budget of the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council and for the renovation and improvement of the Honorable Pedro P. Nakatsukasa Building. It allocates $120,000 for the operational cost of the municipal council and the renovation of the Nakatsukasa Building. It also set aside $600,000 for the Street Naming Commission so it could go about its business of naming the streets of Saipan.

Guam National Guard Battalion leaves for 3-week training

GUNG/SPC JESSE TOVES

Members of the 1-294th Infantry Regiment line up at the check-in counter for their flight to the annual training site in California. About 95 Guam Army National Guard soldiers were among the first group of over 600 soldiers being transported to their training site in California. Other soldiers were traveling on military airplanes departing from Andersen Air Force base.

In what could possibly the largest air movement for Guard soldiers on annual training, over 600 soldiers from the Guam Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry Regiment, and its affiliated Forward Support Company, F Company, 29th Brigade Support Battalion, are leaving island over the next few days for a training site over 8,000 miles away in California.

The training will focus on individual and squad level training for soldiers assigned to the battalion as it prepares for its pending deployment to Afghanistan early next year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"This annual training is our first real opportunity to allow our soldiers the chance to complete a significant amount of the many pre-deployment training requirements. This training is necessary to ensure all of our soldiers are trained and qualified to meet the rigors of deployment and to ensure their safe return home," said Lt. Col. Michael Tougher, 1-294th Infantry commander.

This is also possibly the largest ever air movement of Army Guard members for annual training by Air National Guard assets under a single operation, according to Tougher.

"The fact that the National Guard is moving more than 600 soldiers and 21 pallets of equipment on nine military and three commercial air transports, is an impressive logistical accomplishment," he added.

Several states with Air National Guard assets are supporting the air movement, according to Lt. Col. George Charfauros, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. These states include Alaska, Arizona, California, Georgia, Iowa, Maine Mississippi, New Hampshire, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

The 1-294th Infantry will spend three weeks at Camp Roberts, Calif., to perform their annual training. The base is typically used by Army National Guard and Army Reserve units for their collective training. The Maneuver Training Center Camp Roberts covers a 42,361-acre site that is considered the largest training area under the control of the California Army National Guard. It can support the training requirements of light and heavy maneuver (mounted and dismounted) training, live-fire ranges from small arms to crew serve weapons, aerial gunnery, drop zones, and limited airfield needs on two airfields.

A large movement like this AT provides opportunities for the unit to look at how well they can execute their movement plans among other things, said Maj. Gen. Benny M. Paulino, The Adjutant General for the Guam Guard.

"A deployment like this allows us to go through the process of moving personnel and equipment, exercise rear detachment operations, and family support procedures," said Paulino.

The Guam Army National Guard received the alert order for its 1-294th Infantry and F Company, 29th BSB for deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom late last year.

The alert order is a step in the process leading to mobilization. It also gives the Guam Army National Guard and the 1-294th Infantry command the time and resources it needs to meet the training and validation requirements before the unit reports to its mobilization station, and complete training before deploying into their area of operations.

The 1-294th Infantry is composed of soldiers from Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The anticipated activation of the 1-294th Infantry Regiment may also be considered as the largest group of reserve component troops to be mobilized and deployed from Guam. ***(PR)***

Pacific journalists are excited by agricultural export opportunities

Senior journalists from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were excited about the trade potential of the Pacific agricultural sector during a visit to a root crop processing factory in Navua, Fiji last month.

The visit was organized by the Facilitating Agricultural Commodity Trade Project as part of the program for media delegates attending the Pacific Islands News Association's biannual summit in Pacific Harbor. The root crop processing factory is owned by Kaiming Agro Processing Ltd., a leading exporter of manioc, taro, and value-added ginger products. En route, the journalists visited a small, community farm that grows and supplies root crops to KAPL.

The journalists were given a tour of the ginger processing line by the company's visionary and dynamic director Calvin Qiu, and then treated to a range of baked goods such as biscuits and muffins made with the company's export quality ginger products. The tour was an opportunity for the media representatives to see the link between smallholder farms and agricultural processing firms such as KAPL, as well as the role each plays in regional trade, and how donors such as the EU can successfully link Pacific Island economies to the global economy.

Leone Cabenatabua, general manager of the *Fiji Sun* newspaper, said: "It is a really big incentive for the farmers because they don't have to go far to look for markets. It would be a huge plus if we could do the same sort of thing in other parts of the country."

The field trip broadened the journalists' view of simple agricultural commodities such as ginger, which, prior to the tour, they had viewed as a cash crop with limited use. In Fiji, ginger is predominantly bought by the local Indian and Chinese communities for use in cooking. At KAPL, however, the journalists were shown the export potential of this everyday agricultural crop. KAPL is making a range of value-added ginger products, including brine ginger, ginger in syrup and crystalline ginger, and is looking to increase its export range with ginger powder and fresh ginger (once market access to Australia is achieved).

Of the field trip, Pili Tovega Asiata, a reporter with TV1 in Samoa said: "It was an eye opener for us in the Pacific. We can create more opportunities for our people to create livelihoods rather than rely on imported products."

Based in Fiji, the FACT Project (which will conclude at the end of 2012) works to increase exports of agriculture and forestry products from 14 Pacific members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. ***(SPC)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW12-IFB-006

SUGAR DOCK DREDGING IN SUSUPE, SAIPAN

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Sugar Dock Dredging in Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after May 09, 2012 at DPW Technical Services Division, 1353 Mednilla Avenue-Capital Hill, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred Dollars (**$100.00**) is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. However, the local Business Preference is not available because its use is prohibited by federal law granting funding for this project.

There will be a ***Mandatory*** **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on May 28, 2012, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Division of Fish & Wildlife Conference Room. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on May 31, 2012 to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director, Technical Services Division**, 1353 Mednilla Avenue-Capitol Hill, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that a full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 1353 Mednilla Avenue-Capitol Hill, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if used after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgement of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in t he space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW12-IFB-006"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time June 11, 2012. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notice of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time June 11, 2012, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than June 11, 2012, and must be received no later than June 21, 2012. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, June 27, 2012, However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. local time, on June 14, 2012.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security may be a Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond In the CNMI, and

b) Under penalty of perjury, a certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Government Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is Thirty (30) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at One Hundred Dollars (US $100.00) per working days for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ VICENTE B.CASTRO
Acting Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director Procurement and Supply

/s/ JOAQUIN B. SONGSONG
Acting Secretary of Lands and Natural Resources

BRUCE L. MAILMAN, #F0153
MAILMAN & KARA, LLC
PMB 238 PPP, Box 10,000
Saipan, MP 96950-8900
Telephone: 233-0081
Facsimile: 233-0090

ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF
WELLS FARGO FINANCIAL, INC.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

WELLS FARGO FINANCIAL, INC. Plaintiff, -v- **RAFAEL S. DEMAPAN** Defendant.	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 11- 0137** **FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court on January 26, 2012, in this matter, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, all of the right, title, and interest of defendants Rafael S. Demapan in and to the following real property located at Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands:

LOT NO. 045 A 75, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 045 A 003, the original of which was recorded on April 26, 1983 as Document No. 90-1671 at the office of the Commonwealth Recorder's, Saipan.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on May 11, 2012, at the hour of 4:00 p.m., at the law offices of Mailman & Kara, LLC, 2nd Floor, Tan Marikita Bldg., Beach Road at Cpl. Derence Jack Street, Garapan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Inspection of Property. It is the responsibility of each bidder to inspect the property prior to the sale. Failure to inspect the property or any portion thereof will not constitute ground for any claim, adjustment, or rescission by any buyer.

Warranties and Covenants. All property listed for sale in this Notice will be sold in its current condition, and at its current location. The sale will be held without any warranties or covenants whatsoever, whether express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of title, merchantability, and/or fitness for any purpose whatsoever, all of which warranties and covenants are hereby expressly disclaimed. Neither the undersigned nor the plaintiff may give any warranty or covenant, express or implied, with respect to the property listed for sale in this Notice. Neither the undersigned nor the plaintiff shall be liable for the quality of the property listed for sale in this Notice, or for any fault or defect in the description thereof. Buyers shall not be entitled to rescission, damages, or any other remedy on account thereof.

Conduct of Sale.
a. Reserve. The auction sale may be held with reserve. The reserve price on any property offered for sale may or may not be disclosed to bidders, in the sole discretion of the undersigned.
b. Rights and duties of auctioneer. Consistent with the laws, customs, and usages of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales, the undersigned shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale: (1) to withdraw the property listed for sale in this Notice before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted; (2) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and (3) to reject, on behalf of the seller, any or all bids, for any reason.
c. Bids. Bids may be submitted in advance for any or all of the property listed in this Notice. The highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Advance bids may be submitted only in writing, signed by the bidder, and delivered to the law offices of Mailman & Kara, LLC, 2nd Floor, Tan Marikita Bldg., Beach Road at Cpl. Derence Jack Street, Garapan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The bidder assumes all risk of non-delivery, late delivery, or mis-delivery of bids. Any person, including the plaintiff, may bid in person at the auction sale, whether or not such person has submitted an advance bid.
d. Disputes. The undersigned may resubmit any property listed in this Notice if a dispute arises as to any bid thereon.

Enforcement of Auction Sale.
a. Deposit. Every successful bidder shall pay to the undersigned a deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price immediately after the sale is consummated. Payment shall be in cash or by certified check. The balance must be paid to the plaintiff, in care of Mailman & Kara, LLC, within three (3) days from the date of sale, in cash or by certified check. If the balance is not so paid, plaintiff will retain the deposit as liquidated damages, and will again offer the property for sale.
b. Memorandum of Sale. If requested by the undersigned, every successful bidder must sign a Memorandum of Sale, immediately after the sale of any property is struck off at auction.
c. Court Approval. Every sale may be subject to approval by the Court. The auctioneer makes no warranties or promises with respect to court approval of the sale, including but not limited to the time in which such approval may be granted. No delay in the granting of court approval shall be ground for any claim, adjustment, or rescission by any successful bidder. The successful bidder will be promptly notified if and when court approval is sought, and if and when it is granted.

Change of Terms and Conditions. The undersigned and the plaintiff reserve the right to change any of the terms hereof by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on all bidders by constructive notice.

DATED, this 8th day of May , 2012.

/s/ RONNIE D. HODGES, Auctioneer

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Mars mission remains the goal

It's interesting that some of the same people who have been blasting President Obama as a spendthrift who has put this country on a path to economic ruin also criticize him for being frugal when it comes to space exploration.

These critics decry Obama's decision to retire the ancient space-shuttle fleet and instead have U.S. scientists hitch rides with the Russians to the International Space Station as being equivalent to sharing a bunk with Mephistopheles.

But they mislead when they suggest that Obama has turned his back on manned spaceflight. Rather, the president's proposed 2013 budget would keep the nation on track to fulfill the commitment Obama made to explore deep space.

It's true that some among America's community of former astronauts would take a different approach, but Obama hasn't abandoned a goal he shares with them—to take man where he has never been before, not for the adventure, but for the knowledge to be gained that can improve life on Earth.

NASA does take a hit in the Obama budget, but the drop to $17.7 billion represents only a 0.3 percent decrease. Coming out of the recession in an election year in which he is accused of not knowing the meaning of save, that's not bad. In fact, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said the budget "will support a diverse portfolio and continues the work we started last year."

There will be winners and losers. Funds for planetary science, which includes unmanned missions to Mars and other parts of the solar system, will be cut 20 percent. But the planned August mission to drop a rover on Mars won't be affected, nor will a late-2013 mission to study Mars' upper atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the human exploration and commercial spaceflight programs will get a 6 percent increase. Space technology will get a 22 percent raise. And Star Trek fans should note that Obama hasn't given up on developing a deep-space launch system to carry a manned vehicle far from Earth. His $2.9 billion allocation is only slightly less than this year's $3 billion.

That's the stuff dreams are made of. The deep-space program is what Obama wants to put a human being on Mars in about 25 years. Someone with that goal isn't opposed to manned spaceflight. What he is opposed to is spending large sums for another mission to the moon, and Obama wants private industry to come up with an alternative to the space shuttles for shorter flights.

That's going to happen—and soon. Space Exploration Technologies, also known as Space X, will soon launch the first commercial rocket to the space station. The flight was supposed to occur last week, but was scratched to do more testing. Another company, Orbital Sciences Corp., is also close to launching a space cargo vehicle.

Many Americans felt a twinge in the heart as they watched recent news footage of the space shuttles riding piggyback atop Boeing 747s on their way to their final destinations to become museum exhibits. See them if you can, the relics of space travel now relegated to history. But there is a future.

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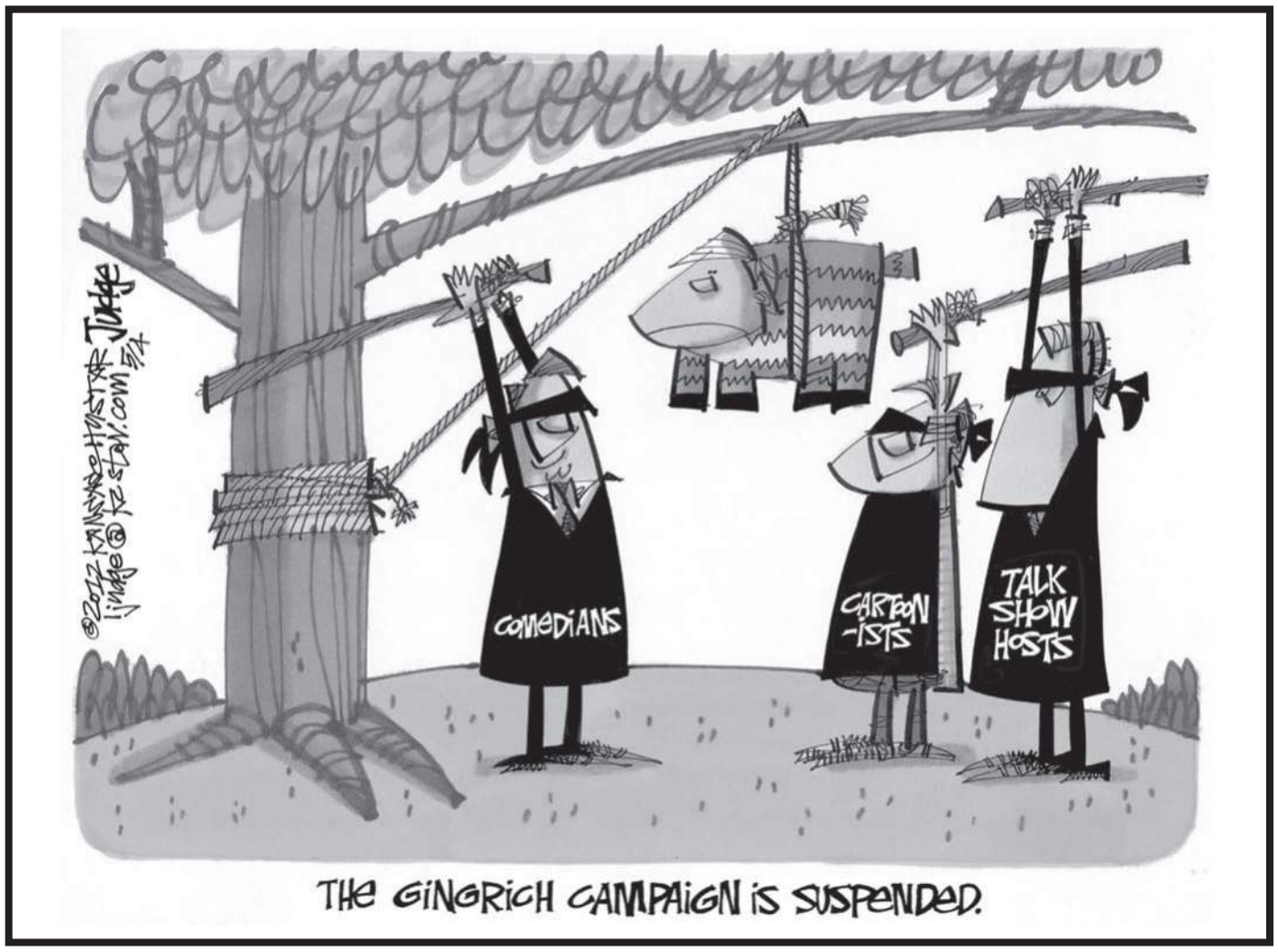


Dong Bei trails: Qi Xing Shan

By JAIME R. VERGARA
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: The author often writes of his travels and the following adds to his adventures in China chronicled in these pages in times past.

We often have the urge to move out of the confines of academe and explore the wonders of our surrounding environs. The relics of ages past abound around Shenyang (the old Mukden to history buffs) here in Liaoning, Northeast China, previously the Manchukuo of Japan and the Manchu region of the last reigning dynasty of China, the foreign and non-Han Qings. One of those relics of antiquity is the Beiling Shaolin Park, second in size to the Forbidden City of Beijing though of equal imperial magnificence in cultural aura and architectural design.

In China, with the new focus on cultural artifacts as financial assets, most of the ancient sites and the recreated newer ones cater to the awe and wonder of the visiting travelers and tourists as we wade through its more tacky commercial offerings.

Thus we tend to look for the little insignificant cultural site that is not along the well-beaten track, nor cost an arm and a leg to visit. An hour out of the Aerospace University outskirt of Shenyang, still within the bus system, is a rural village I heard described by a colleague as a local Buddhist shrine, vintage a millennium old.

At the top what to us is nothing but a little molehill called Qi Xing Shan (shan means "mountain") stands a stupa erected close to a thousand years ago with a Buddhist monastery nearby to guard the pilgrim site and propagate meditational practices. The description was inviting enough that at the first opportunity, we poured our green tea into our drinking carafe and headed out with our backpack an hour's ride north of our location.

We will skip the travails of getting to the place on a milk run of a public conveyance for another telling, other than to say that going elbow-to-elbow with the farmers in a packed bus might be more authenticity than we bargained for. We cannot complain, though, since the ride cost less than a dollar!

The little settlement is not like the commune we visited outside of Shanghai in the late '80s. Then, the dwellings were spartan but tidy, with a communal rationale for the private living quarters, the communal kitchen, and the common toiletry structures. Instead, Mao's three-wheel multi-function unit that was a tractor, thresher, minibus, etc., has been supplanted by copies of U.S. prairie harvesters and combines. The produce output has obviously skyrocketed, the locals affording all the cheap and tacky gadgetries of contemporary commercial life.

The site of the mountain shrine would reveal a very telling story of how the memory of the past is retained while meeting the practical requirements of the present. The Buddhist monastic compound remains

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) is a former PSS teacher and is currently writing from the campus of Shenyang Aerospace University in China.

a traveler's destination, more for the faithful than gawkers. The temple buildings show new structures under construction. Since the Guo Chang Dang (communist administration) is hardly known to spend public resources on religious buildings, this came as a surprise.

The site turned out to be a combination of public works, applied technology, historical preservation, and real estate transaction. On top of the hill stood the old stupa now just a hundred meters from a precipice that used to be a slope but now goes straight down into a quarry.

We stood on top of a cliff not unlike being above the face of the limestone quarry at Kannat Tabla on Saipan. The stupa sat just below an imposing gunnery of more recent vintage, built in the late '40s by the Guo Ming Dang (nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek who later fled to Taiwan) to counter Mao's insurgents (Dong Bei, the northeast, was the first territory wrestled by the revolutionaries from the nationalists), but above a popularly visited pilgrim's shrine where the faithful lit their incense to accompany earnest supplications for assistance to good fortune!

Half of the hill was traded by the monastery to the locals to quarry material to build a long dike that keeps the river waters from inundating the farms during the rains. We saw practical engineering locally used to meet farm requirements, while preserving a religious institution that freights historical memory and cultural practices.

Like other communal nodes that gather folks during holidays, tourism already has designs in converting the newly dug quarry area into a family entertainment center with the pits deep and wide enough to simulate a river and a lake, while the other half of the hill retains the forested quality of its slopes heading down to the grain and vegetable farms, fruit orchards, and animal husbandry pens surrounding the perched monastery. The dike protects the crops from the river that used to overflow its banks. The common folks are productive and happy, the government proud, and the local bank uncomplaining with the increase in productivity and financial transactions.

We thought we were just visiting a religious shrine! Instead, we encountered a microcosm of China. Beijing was hardly involved in any of these transactions other than providing a policy cover that allowed the local government and the resident folks to meet their own requirements, with the blessings of the religious establishment, but at their own cost. Would that the CNMI operated likewise!

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Fund board fails due diligence?

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

We've gone around the block trying to figure out the Fund's financial puzzle, slated to take its kamikaze internment in about two year's time.

I recalled raising a flag on what the board ought to quiz in the selection of investment advisers but it fell on deaf ears. In brief, if the investment advisers were rock solid and had the requisite wherewithal to guide the Fund, would the pension be in trouble today? Is this why we opt to overlook taking critical review of their background so the Fund sinks from their ill-advised recommendations? Have we not turned them into lords because we've become servile to their command in view of our ignorance?

In a recent article in *Forbes Magazine* written by Mr. Edward Siedle, a nationally recognized authority on pensions, investment management, and securities matters, he said he was invited to deliver a stern warning to the government pension plan trustees who would be in attendance: the advice their funds were receiving from Wall Street stockbrokers posing as pension specialists was tainted by conflicts of interests that were profoundly undermining pension returns. These kickback schemes could lead to the demise of their already underfunded pensions. That was 10 years ago.

He noted that in 2002, "some savvy members of the Association for Fiduciary Studies had read about an investigation of pension adviser abuses I had recently successfully concluded on behalf of the billion-plus City of Nashville public pension fund. These members knew that public pensions in the U.S. territories in the Pacific were being similarly scammed and wanted the trustees of these funds to hear it from me—a credible expert who was objective and an outsider. After familiarizing myself with the details and concluding that the region's public pensions were indeed being fleeced, I agreed to make the journey.

"I warned the attendees at the conference: 'The investment consultant to a pension occupies a unique position. He is the one expert the trustees of a pension fund rely upon for objective advice on virtually any matter involving investment of the fund's assets. The relationship between consultant and pension client is one of utmost trust and confidence. As a result of his role as an objective guide, the consultant arguably exerts the greatest degree of influence over the investment process– far more than any single money manager.'

"Remarkably, I have witnessed pension boards accept assurances from their consultants that even the most outrageous self-dealing scenarios involving the consultant pose no danger to the fund. To the contrary, any hint or suggestion that the consultant's ability to provide independent, objective advice may be compromised should be thoroughly examined before it is dismissed.

"I still have the business card given to me by one of the attendees after my speech, Juan S. Torres. It appears he was the former administrator of the Marianas Islands Retirement System and recently nominated to serve on the board of trustees of the fund. I have no idea whether he acted upon the information I provided in my speech but it appears that, at best, any efforts he may have made to stop the abuses related to the fund I identified, failed.

"According to today's *Wall Street Journal*, in October 2009 the retiree participants in the Fund filed a lawsuit against Merrill Lynch, the investment adviser to the Fund since the 1980s. The lawyer representing the retirees had, at the suggestion of one or more attendees at my speech, spoken with me before the suit was filed.

"Apparently the pension fund's board of trustees refused to join the lawsuit, instead blaming government failure to make contributions and over-generous benefits as the real culprits. Let me assure you that while decades of tainted investment advice may not be the sole cause of the demise of the plan, it is, in my opinion, a leading factor. Further, it was no secret, even a decade ago, that the integrity of the plan's investments had been undermined by adviser conflicts.

"What is happening in Northern Mariana Islands isn't an isolated phenomena. Merrill Lynch and the lead plaintiffs in a class action involving about 70 municipal pension plans in Florida together filed a proposed settlement recently seeking to end a dispute over whether Wilshire breached its fiduciary duties as the investment consultant to these pensions. The proposed deal, filed with the U.S. District Court of the Middle District of Florida in Jacksonville, would have Merrill pay a mere $8.5 million to the class but not admit wrongdoing. The settlement hearing is tentatively scheduled for July 16, 2012. I have estimated approximately $1 billion in Florida public pension damages related to adviser conflicts and consider the proposed Florida settlement pitiful.

"Truth be known, Wall Street has handled government pension plans every bit as shabbily as retail clients. Wall Street not only has profited at the expense of pensions participants—firm profits have been of paramount importance. As more public pensions falter and fail, forensic investigations will reveal just how badly government workers who contribute to pensions and the taxpayers who backstop these pensions have been swindled."

But then we scrambled to absolve the firm from any liabilities, true? What if in fact it is proven that it has dealt with the NMI Fund investment with conflict of interest and other anomalies contrary to the best interest of retirees' fate? Didn't we take off our holster a bit too soon? I can't help but admire the audacity of former board chairman Sixto Igisomar and Fund administrator Richard Villagomez convincing brain-dead legislators to collectively push the wrong card. What lame disposition apparently did without due diligence as to have absolved Fund investors for any inadequacies they commit. Can you quiz your experts why the Fund is bankrupt?

Letters to the Editor

Open letter to Mr. Paul Manglona

Briefly, about you, Paul Manglona. You have been elected to the CNMI Senate since the middle part of 1998, specifically the 6th CNMI Senate. Under the democratic form of government we simply have three branches of government: the Executive Branch, the Legislature, and the Judiciary. You are an elected leader under the legislative branch. Per my understanding of your status within the CNMI government, you are classified as a "leader" of the CNMI. Unfortunately, you are not acting like one of the leaders of the CNMI. Here is my reason.

The CNMI Retirement Fund's financial dilemma is not a story. It is history. Throughout its history, you have been—and still are—one of the leaders of the CNMI. My question to you is, as president of the Senate, what specific action have you taken to stop the financial meltdown of the Retirement Fund? In my opinion, you have done *nothing* whatsoever. You see, it is not just Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's leadership that is in question! Your leadership is also in question. Stop pointing fingers because you are just as at fault!

Three-and-a-half years ago, the Honorable Judge Govendo made a judgment against the CNMI government's liability to the Retirement Fund in the amount of $300 million-plus. Under CNMI law, only an act of the Legislature (where you are the president of the Senate and still are) could authorize Gov. Fitial to make any payment to the Retirement Fund. That has not happened and that is the reason why the Fund is in this financial predicament. Had you taken the leadership role as Senate president, perhaps the filing of Chapter 11 could have been avoided!

Paul, leaders do not point fingers. They take action. You have failed big time in this department. You would rather play your usual politicking rather than try to find solutions to the Fund's problems. I beg all the retirees on Rota to vote Paul Manglona out of office.

What amazes me more about you, Paul, is you would rather protect the $4,000 untaxed dollars that you extract from the CNMI government coffers, on a monthly basis, for personal gain. This amount of $48,000 a year times 22 years of service is equal to $105,600 in untaxed dollars from the CNMI taxpayers. Shame on you, Paul! You have put your personal interest (gain) over the livelihood of retirees!

So here is the deal. Stop playing politics and, as one of the leaders of the CNMI, put your personal vendetta against Governor Fitial aside and collectively with the other elected leaders of the CNMI sit together with one very cold beer and get to work for the common good of the people of the CNMI! I am also calling on Speaker Cabrera to step up the plate. Sir, with all due respect, you have been mum on the issue. *Biba Marianas!*

Isidro Iguel Kani
As Matuis, Saipan

Solutions

The Retirement Fund issue is clearly a social, economic, and political problem and lawyers have been asked to solve it! Given the factors and variables, I knew this issue was not going to be handled properly, which is why I got involved. The Fund's situation is a systemic issue that is driven by social, economic, and political factors but we have lawyers at the forefront leading the issue for the Fund. On the other side, we have the NMI administration (governor), the Legislature, Commonwealth Retirement Association, DCP members, the Superior Court, and Jorgensen with lawyers attacking the Fund from all sides. It is easy to see why the Fund's board ran for cover under bankruptcy, which I originally thought was a good idea but I must agree with the governor about the cost being too much, given the fact that a quarter of a million has already been spent by the Fund on lawyers and it looks like it may have all been a waste if the bankruptcy is denied. What was really a simple problem of collecting on the government's debt to the Fund has now become a complex and supercharged issue, with only one definitive solution that has been offered by the governor but lawyers have us in court.

I can tell you from the history of lawyers that they will keep us tied up in court forever. That is their job—to go to court. So are they really going to offer another solution that does not involve the law and the courts? Of course not. They wouldn't have a job. We certainly need lawyers and I'm not saying the lawyers were out to rip us off but I do think we did a lot to set ourselves up for a rip-off. There is no doubt that the lawyers gave sound legal advice and it was accepted by those seeking lawyers on both sides so it is easy to see why we are literally in court going nowhere fast and burning cash for the fuel that is not getting the $300-million plus back. So keep our eyes on the prize—the $300 million plus and not a court victory because it is going to take cold hard cash to fix the Fund, not a verdict. A verdict is moot without the cash!

Just think about it, everyone wants to sue the government and make it pay the $300 million to the Fund. Well, the first thing we should have thought about is the fact that we are in effect suing ourselves as we are the government! So the people must first ask themselves, "How are we going to repay the Fund?" It doesn't matter if a receiver or the courts order the government to pay. We know our government is broke and will probably have to end up following the governor's solution to sell some properties anyway. The focus should have been on how to help the governor with his solution instead of fighting each other in court. We are being sidetracked by the hype of the announcement that the Fund would die that was heightened by the bankruptcy announcement. All the stakeholders need to be working together to save the Fund because it seems everyone is now out for themselves. The non-retirees want to pull their money out, which is only going to weaken and shorten the life expectancy of the Fund—a selfish attitude but understandable when you can't trust the powers-that-be. Some retirees don't want their benefits cut to save the Fund, just pay them until the Fund dies, which is a quitter's mentality and very shortsighted. Then there are those who seem to think the federal powers-that-be or whoever can somehow force the CNMI government to come up with money when the government is broke—a mirage solution because we are the ones who will pay in the end. It is our government and we will be held accountable for paying.

In retrospect, it seems that all the Fund board really needed to do was to get a court order delaying any adverse actions against the Fund until after the election because the passage of the governor's amendment to Article 11 would virtually guarantee the repayment of the $300 million plus—the end of story and a happy one at that! The time we are now wasting in court with lawyers could have been used to make sure the solutions are acceptable and on the ballot. The sooner this issue can get out of the lawyers' hands and in the hands of the people who must pay the debt, the sooner it will be resolved. The people of the CNMI are eventually going to have to come up with a way to repay the $300 million plus. We need to take the governor's option and any other options offered to the people in the voting booth and something must pass. Our backs are against the wall and we have only one option: join forces to overcome the challenges that we are all facing because we cannot afford to let the Retirement Fund die.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°

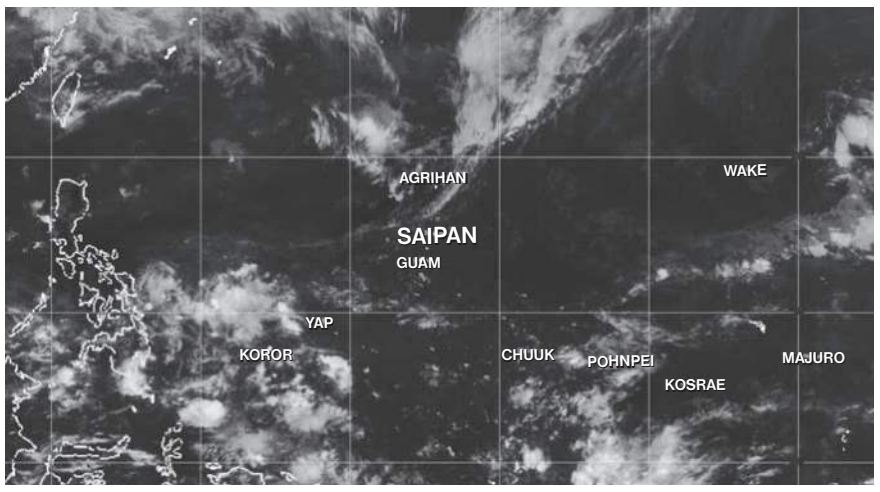
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼80
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼76
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼78
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼78
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲85	▼77
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼80

Around The Globe

Auckland	Thunderstorms	▲66	▼60
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲88	▼59
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼80
Honolulu	Sunny	▲82	▼70
London	Showers	▲60	▼57
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼60
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲94	▼82
Melbourne	Showers	▲68	▼48
Miami	Thundershowers	▲83	▼72
New York	Showers	▲67	▼61
Osaka	Showers	▲75	▼58
Paris	Showers	▲68	▼59
Pusan	Sunny	▲72	▼57
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲76	▼59
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲71	▼40
San Francisco	Sunny	▲74	▼53
Seoul	Sunny	▲83	▼56
Tokyo	Showers	▲71	▼61
Washington, DC	Thundershowers	▲78	▼65

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A warm front stretches southwestward from northwest of Minami Tori Shima through 25N145E to a low pressure system centered southwest of Iwo To island at 22N137E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms associated with these features are found just north of the CNMI or north of a line from 19N140E to 22N154E. A surface trough extends northeastward from a low-level circulation centered southwest of Koror at 3N130E to 12N134E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are seen near the circulation and trough over the Republic of Palau west of a line from 13N134E to 5N141E to EQ141E. A low-level trough extends northeastward from 1N153E to east of Wake Island at 20N172E then turns northward to beyond 25N at 172E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring near the southern end of the trough south of a line from 5N151E to 4N158E to 2N159E to 2N163E. Similar weather is also present west of Pohnpei within 35 miles of a line from 7N154E to 6N155E and south of Pohnpei within 35 miles of a line from 5N157E to 7N160E aided by upper-level divergence related to an upper low and upper trough in the vicinity. Scattered showers are evident north of Enewetak atoll within 90 miles of a line from 12N160E to 16N175E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are happening east of Wake Island or north of a line from 19N171E to 17N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:04 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
9:54 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
5:20 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:50 AM	6:37 PM
Thursday	5:50 AM	6:37 PM
Friday	5:50 AM	6:37 PM
Saturday	5:49 AM	6:38 PM
Sunday	5:49 AM	6:38 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:56 PM	8:34 AM
Thursday	10:50 PM	9:36 AM
Friday	11:39 PM	10:36 AM
Saturday		11:32 AM
Sunday	12:24 AM	12:25 PM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 6, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05062	2:40am	3:10am	1, 5
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
UA5062	3:40am	4:15am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5062	4:50am	5:40am	1, 5
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA5074	11:30pm	12:20pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily
UA5078	6:50pm	7:40pm	Daily
UA5072	9:55pm	10:45pm	Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:05am	8:50am	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
OZ606	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:30pm	6:55pm	Daily
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
OZ606/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:05am	10:15pm	Daily via NRT
UA5076/183	3:10pm	8:45pm	Daily via GUM
UA5076/193	3:10pm	10:25pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:30pm	10:45pm	Daily via ICN
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA5072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
OZ606/721	2:20am	11:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:50am	11:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5076/147	4:35pm	9:45pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:30pm	10:40pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
UA5062	3:40am	5:40am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)			
UA5064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5062	2:40am	4:15am	1, 5 via ROP
UA5071	7:10am	8:00am	Daily
UA5073	10:05am	10:55am	Daily
UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA5077	5:25pm	6:15pm	Daily
UA5079	8:35pm	9:25pm	Daily
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:15pm	12:50am+1	Daily
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ603	8:50am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
DL172/288	8:05am	12:50am+1	Daily via NRT
UA190/5077	10:55am	6:15pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:55am	9:25pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
UA192/5071	9:45pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:25pm	8:00am+1	2, 5 via GUM
OZ704/603	11:45pm	2:20pm+1	Daily via ICN
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ722/605	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
UA180/5076	10:35pm	8:00am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Business

Austerity now dirty word in Europe, but what next?

By SARAH DiLORENZO and DAVID McHUGH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

In this Friday, April 13, 2012, file photo, workers march in downtown Rome. Austerity has been the main prescription across Europe for dealing with the continent's nearly 3-year-old debt crisis, brought on by too much government spending. Austerity measures have sent Italian unemployment up to 9.8 percent and put the country in a recession that is expected to shrink its economy 1.2 percent this year.

PARIS (AP)—The day after Francois Hollande rode to power in France on a slogan of "change now," the conversation in Europe was already different Monday: Austerity had become a dirty word.

What replaces it, though, was anything but clear.

The newly powerful in France and Greece want to roll back the spending cuts and tax increases that have defined Europe's response to its 3-year-old debt crisis. But campaign rhetoric is likely to prove more extreme than any real-world reversal of the budget tightening.

World financial markets took Europe's latest round of political upheaval in stride, convulsing early and then recovering. The continent's uncertain future—including the possibility of Greece leaving the euro—was causing anxiety but not panic about the threat to the global economy.

But there is hardly unity in Europe.

Sunday night, Socialist president-elect Hollande celebrated his victory over Nicolas Sarkozy by vowing, "Austerity can no longer be inevitable!"

On Monday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel gently pushed back.

She rejected Hollande's call to renegotiate a treaty signed last month on tougher action to control government deficits. "We in Germany, and I personally," she said, "believe the fiscal pact is not up for negotiation."

Still, she stressed the importance of French-German cooperation—and her willingness to meet soon with Hollande.

Economists said that while the anti-austerity winds are bound to stir up short-term political instability, especially in Greece, they could eventually bring some financial calm.

"This is going to force some rethinking" all across Europe about how to manage the debt crisis, said Laura Gonzalez, a finance professor at Fordham University in New York. "That is good for everybody."

Greece remains the focus of Europe's financial and political unease. Political parties that made gains by rejecting belt-tightening still have to assemble a majority coalition in Parliament before they can begin governing. The conservatives got the first try Monday but failed—leaving a new left-wing, party to take its turn. If no party can assemble a coalition, the country will need to hold new elections, probably in June.

The main stock index in Greece plunged almost 7 percent. France's CAC-40 ended 1.7 percent higher.

The Dow Jones industrial average in the United States fell as much as 68 points early Monday but recouped its losses and ended the day down 30 at 13,008.

The biggest fear was that Greece's new leadership would renege on commitments made to secure the country's massive rescue loans—or even leave the euro. Merkel pressed Greek leaders on Monday to stay the course. "Of course, the most important thing is that the programs we agreed with Greece are continued," she said.

Markets recover from stumble over Europe elections

By PALLAVI GOGOI
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Stock markets recovered around the world following an early stumble caused by election results in France and Greece that appeared to jeopardize Europe's plans for fighting its debt crisis.

Greek voters over the weekend punished mainstream politicians who had backed cost-cutting plans demanded by the country's international lenders, leaving the country without clear leadership. In France President Nicolas Sarkozy was thrown out in favor of Socialist Francois Hollande, who pledged "to finish with austerity."

Investors on Monday worried that the shifting political landscape in Europe could undermine the region's long battle to keep its shared currency intact and restore the faith of global investors. European markets slumped early on, but closed higher after worries about the political changes dissipated and investors focused on Hollande's pledges to encourage economic growth.

Investors were also relieved after Spain announced a plan to present measures this week to support the country's ailing banks. Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said he would not rule out lending or injecting public money into the country's financial system.

Stocks rose sharply in Spain, ending up 2.7 percent. France's main index gained 1.7 percent. The euro also recovered ground it lost against the dollar.

In the U.S., the Dow Jones industrial average fell as much as 68 points in early trading, but recouped its losses and even gained 10 points by the afternoon. The Dow finished the day down 29.74 points, or 0.2 percent, at 13,008.53.

The Standard & Poor's 500 also started the day lower but ended up 0.48 points at 1,369.58. The Nasdaq composite index rose 1.4 points to 2,957.76.

The election results in Europe showed that voters were rejecting the extreme belt-tightening required by international bailouts and favored by Germany's leadership.

Investors are waiting hear the newly-elected leaders articulate their visions for how to deal with the euro zone's debt crisis, which is why there is a muted reaction from stock markets, according Kim Caughey-Forrest, equity research analyst at investment firm Fox Pitt Capital Group.

"There is no reason to cry until you get hurt," said Caughey-Forrest.

The verdict from European voters will likely force leaders there to go back to the table and come up with more acceptable solutions to the debt crisis that has plagued many nations. The deep cuts in government spending have already worsened the situation in many countries, leading them into deeper economic distress and increasing already high unemployment.

Oil hovers below $98 amid weak US, Europe demand

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices hovered below $98 a barrel Tuesday in Asia as traders eyed signs of weak economic growth in the U.S. and Europe, which suggest crude demand will remain tepid.

Benchmark oil for June delivery was down 13 cents to $97.81 a barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 55 cents to settle at $97.94 in New York on Monday.

Brent crude for June delivery was up 10 cents at $113.26 per barrel in London.

Crude has dropped from $106 last week amid investor concern that struggling developed economies will undermine oil consumption. Last week, the U.S. said factory orders fell in March while the economy added fewer jobs than expected in April. Spain also said its economy slipped into recession last quarter as the unemployment rate reached 24 percent.

"While it is easy to malign the European recovery, the latest round of U.S. macro-economic data is troubling in itself," energy trader and consultant The Schork Group said in a report.

If the fall in oil prices continues, prices for crude products such as gasoline should also drop, providing a potential boost for consumer spending.

"The U.S. economy has shown it's incapable of maintaining growth levels when energy prices surge, so we expect growth to remain weak in the midterm and the long-term, unless the current sell-off holds," Schork said.

Investors will be watching closely the latest data on U.S. crude inventories scheduled to be released later Tuesday. Analysts surveyed by Platts, the energy information arm of McGraw-Hill Cos., expect the American Petroleum Institute will report crude supplies rose 2.2 million barrels last week.

"Crude supplies have been generally rising, with increases from Iraq, Libya and the U.S.," said Lawrence Eagles, an oil analyst with J.P. Morgan.

In other energy trading, heating oil was up 1 cent at $2.99 per gallon and gasoline futures gained 1.2 cents to $2.99 per gallon. Natural gas added 0.2 cents at $2.34 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Electric Toyota RAV4 to start near $50K

DETROIT (AP)—Toyota's electric RAV4 will save you gas. But it'll cost you.

Toyota Motor Corp. said Monday the electric version of its RAV4 SUV will cost $49,800 when it goes on sale this summer. That's more than double the $22,650 starting price of the gas version, although the electric RAV4 will be eligible for $7,500 federal tax credit that will narrow the gap.

The electric version of the popular SUV will go around 100 miles on a charge. It takes six hours to fully charge it using a 240-volt charger.

The RAV4 EV widens the electric choices for U.S. buyers. Until now, the only electrics on the market were small cars like the Nissan Leaf and high-end sports cars from Tesla Motors. The RAV4 is the first electric SUV. Tesla designed and built its battery and drive system under an agreement announced two years ago.

Toyota's initial sales goals are modest. The company expects to sell only 2,600 RAV4 EVs over the next three years. By comparison, it sold more than 15,000 gas-powered RAV4s in April.

"We believe that the RAV4 EV will attract sophisticated early technology adopters, much like the first-generation Prius," said Bob Carter, head of the U.S. Toyota division. "It's designed for consumers who prioritize the environment and appreciate performance. We look forward to seeing how the market responds."

Sales will be limited, in part, because the vehicle will only be available in certain markets. California will be first, with sales in four markets, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, starting later this summer.

The RAV4 EV's price tag also could hurt sales. It costs $14,600 more than the Leaf and $10,000 more than the Chevrolet Volt or the electric Ford Focus. The electric Focus also costs more than double the gas version. Focus EV sales have been modest since the car went on sale late last year.

Electric vehicles also have been slow to catch on in the U.S. because of the limited charging infrastructure. General Motors Co. and Nissan Motor Co. both fell short of their electric vehicle sales goals in 2011.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
13,008.53	1,369.58	2,957.76
-29.74	+0.48	+1.42
-0.23%	+0.04%	+0.05%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	0.9811	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7618	Philippine Peso	42.3700
British Pound	0.6182	Indian Rupee	52.7200	Singapore Dollar	1.2452
Canadian Dollar	0.9935	Indonesian Rupiah	9,216.00	South Korean Won	1,135.65
Chinese Yuan	6.3087	Japanese Yen	79.9850	Swiss Franc	0.9215
Euro	0.7671	Malaysian Ringgit	3.0555	Taiwan Dollar	29.3020
		New Zealand Dollar	1.2600	Thailand Baht	30.9700

Nation

CIA thwarts 'undetectable' al-Qaida bomb plot

By ADAM GOLDMAN and MATT APUZZO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—The CIA thwarted an ambitious plot by al-Qaida's affiliate in Yemen to destroy a U.S.-bound airliner using a bomb with a sophisticated new design around the one-year anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden, U.S. officials said Monday.

The plot involved an upgrade of the underwear bomb that failed to detonate aboard a jetliner over Detroit on Christmas 2009. This new bomb was also designed to be used in a passenger's underwear, but this time al-Qaida developed a more refined detonation system, U.S. officials said.

The FBI is examining the latest bomb to see whether it could have passed through airport security and brought down an airplane, officials said. They said the device did not contain metal, meaning it probably could have passed through an airport metal detector. But it was not clear whether new body scanners used in many airports would have detected it.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., who heads the Senate Intelligence Committee, told reporters Monday that she had been briefed about an "undetectable" device that was "going to be on a U.S.-bound airliner."

There were no immediate plans to change security procedures at U.S. airports.

The would-be suicide bomber, based in Yemen, had not yet picked a target or bought a plane ticket when the CIA stepped in and seized the bomb, officials said. It's not immediately clear what happened to the alleged bomber.

White House spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden said President Barack Obama learned about the plot in April and was assured the device posed no threat to the public.

"The president thanks all intelligence and counterterrorism professionals involved for their outstanding work and for serving with the extraordinary skill and commitment that their enormous responsibilities demand," Hayden said.

The operation unfolded even as the White House and Department of Homeland Security assured the American public that they knew of no al-Qaida plots against the U.S. around the anniversary of bin Laden's death. The operation was carried out over the past few weeks, officials said.

"We have no credible information that terrorist organizations, including al-Qaida, are plotting attacks in the U.S. to coincide with the anniversary of bin Laden's death," White House press secretary Jay Carney said on April 26.

On May 1, the Department of Homeland Security said, "We have no indication of any specific, credible threats or plots against the U.S. tied to the one-year anniversary of bin Laden's death."

The White House did not explain those statements Monday.

The CIA mission was such a secret, even top lawmakers were not told about it as the operation unfolded, one U.S. official said Monday.

The AP learned about the thwarted plot last week but agreed to White House and CIA requests not to publish it immediately because the sensitive intelligence operation was still under way. Once officials said those concerns were allayed, the AP decided to disclose the plot Monday despite requests from the Obama administration to wait for an official announcement Tuesday.

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security acknowledged the existence of the bomb late Monday, but there were no immediate plans to adjust security procedures at airports. Other officials, who were briefed on the operation, insisted on anonymity to discuss details of the plot, many of which the U.S. has not officially acknowledged.

"The device never presented a threat to public safety, and the U.S. government is working closely with international partners to address associated concerns with the device," the FBI said in a statement.

It's not clear who built the bomb, but, because of its sophistication and its similarity to the Christmas bomb, counterterrorism officials suspected it was the work of master bomb maker Ibrahim Hassan al-Asiri or one of his protégées. Al-Asiri constructed the first underwear bomb and two others that al-Qaida built into printer cartridges and shipped to the U.S. on cargo planes in 2010.

No end to obesity epidemic, 20-year forecast shows

WASHINGTON (AP)—The obesity epidemic may be slowing, but don't take in those pants yet.

Today, just over a third of U.S. adults are obese. By 2030, 42 percent will be, says a forecast released Monday.

That's not nearly as many as experts had predicted before the once-rapid rises in obesity rates began leveling off. But the new forecast suggests even small continuing increases will add up.

"We still have a very serious problem," said obesity specialist Dr. William Dietz of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Worse, the already obese are getting fatter. Severe obesity will double by 2030, when 11 percent of adults will be nearly 100 pounds overweight, or more, concluded the research led by Duke University.

That could be an ominous consequence of childhood obesity. Half of severely obese adults were obese as children, and they put on more pounds as they grew up, said CDC's Dietz.

AP

In this May 2, 2012 file photo, Washougal Mayor Sean Guard, left, coaxes Camas Mayor Scott Higgins to step on the scales during their weigh-in in Washougal, Wash. The mayors of the two neighboring towns are in a "Biggest Loser" style contest to see which of the two communities can lose the most weight.

While being overweight increases anyone's risk of diabetes, heart disease and a host of other ailments, the severely obese are most at risk—and the most expensive to treat. Already, conservative estimates suggest obesity-related problems account for at least 9 percent of the nation's yearly health spending, or $150 billion a year.

Data presented Monday at a major CDC meeting paint something of a mixed picture of the obesity battle. There's some progress: Clearly, the skyrocketing rises in obesity rates of the 1980s and `90s have ended. But Americans aren't getting thinner.

Over the past decade, obesity rates stayed about the same in women, while men experienced a small rise, said CDC's Cynthia Ogden. That increase occurred mostly in higher-income men, for reasons researchers couldn't explain.

About 17 percent of the nation's children and teens were obese in 2009 and 2010, the latest available data. That's about the same as at the beginning of the decade, although a closer look by Ogden shows continued small increases in boys, especially African-American boys.

Does that mean obesity has plateaued? Well, some larger CDC databases show continued upticks, said Duke University health economist Eric Finkelstein, who led the new CDC-funded forecast. His study used that information along with other factors that influence obesity rates—including food prices, prevalence of fast-food restaurants, unemployment—to come up with what he called "very reasonable estimates" for the next two decades.

Army: No bullet wound found in soldier Skype death

WASHINGTON (AP)—Army investigators said Monday they found no bullet wound or evidence of foul play in the death of a soldier in Afghanistan who died during a Skype video chat with his wife.

Capt. Bruce Kevin Clark collapsed while speaking to his wife on May 1 from his base in Tarin Kot, Afghanistan, southwest of Kabul. His wife, Susan Orellana-Clark, has suggested that Clark was shot, citing a hole visible in the closet behind him that she believed was a bullet hole.

Investigators said an initial probe showed no trauma to the body except that Clark broke his nose when he fell forward. Orellana-Clark said he didn't seem alarmed before he collapsed.

Christopher Grey, a spokesman for the Army Criminal Investigation Command, said Monday that the investigation is still under way.

"But the important thing is that there was no bullet wound, no trauma," except that Clark's nose was possibly broken when he fell on his desk, Grey said in a telephone interview.

Clark

"We can positively say that Captain Clark was not shot," Grey later said in a statement.

An autopsy was done Friday but it could take several weeks to get results of toxicology and tissue testing done at that time, Paul Stone, a spokesman for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner, said Monday.

Clark's family released a statement Sunday describing what his wife saw in the video feed recording her husband's death.

"The closet behind him had a bullet hole in it," the statement said, adding that others, including a member of the military who came to Orellana-Clark's Texas home, also believed it was a bullet hole.

The statement says the Skype link remained open for two hours after Clark collapsed as family and friends in the U.S. and Afghanistan tried to get Clark help. Although it was the night of Monday, April 30, at his El Paso, Texas, home, Clark's time of death is officially listed as May 1, the date in Afghanistan at the time.

"After two hours and many frantic phone calls by Mrs. Clark, two military personnel arrived in the room and appeared to check his pulse, but provided no details about his condition to his wife," the statement said.

Despite the trauma of witnessing her husband's death from thousands of miles away, Orellana-Clark said last week through a statement issued by the family that she and her extended family were thankful that husband and wife "were together in his last moments."

FBI says bodies of missing Tenn. mom, daughter found

GUNTOWN, Miss. (AP)—The bodies of a Tennessee mother and her oldest daughter were found behind an alleged kidnapper's house in north Mississippi, the FBI said Monday, and authorities believe the woman's two other daughters are still with the man accused in their abduction.

Jo Ann Bain and her three daughters disappeared April 27 as the family was packing to move to Arizona. The bodies of Bain and her 14-year-old daughter, Adrienne Bain, were found behind Adam Mayes' house near Guntown, a rural area police have been searching.

AP

This combo image made of undated photos provided by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety shows, clockwise from top left, Jo Ann Bain and her daughters, Adrienne, 14, Kyliyah 8, and Alexandria, 12.

The bodies were discovered late last week and positively identified. The FBI did not say how the two died.

The FBI said it believed the other daughters—12-year-old Alexandria and 8-year-old Kyliyah—were still with Mayes. The agency did not say in a news release why it thought that, and FBI spokesman Joel Siskovic said no further details were available on the bodies or the search for Mayes and the girls.

Mayes, a longtime friend of Bain's husband, had stayed over at the family's house to help them pack and load a U-Haul to drive across the country to Arizona, authorities said. Gary Bain, who was at the house that night, awoke to find his wife, daughters and Mayes gone.

He couldn't reach his wife on her cell phone that day, and reported them missing when the girls didn't get off the school bus.

Mayes was last seen a week ago in Guntown, about 80 miles south of the Bain family's home in Whiteville, Tenn. Authorities talked to Mayes early on in the investigation, but he fled when they tried to contact him again, Siskovic said.

Both Gary Bain and Mayes were once married to sisters, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation spokeswoman Kristin Helm said.

Jo Ann Bain's Facebook page showed in the days before the four disappeared she was packing and working on homework. Her last post, dated April 26, said "a good venting always makes you feel better." It didn't say why she was venting.

Jo Ann Bain's aunt hoped her niece and the girls were safe.

"I pray for Jo Ann and the girls to be OK and for them to come home," said Beverly Goodman, who works at Whiteville City Hall.

Asia

Activist confident China will allow him to leave

By GILLIAN WONG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING (AP)—A Chinese activist who triggered a diplomatic dispute between China and the United States said Monday he is confident that Beijing will hold up its end of a tentative deal to let him study overseas.

Chen Guangcheng is a blind, self-taught legal activist who made a daring escape from brutal house arrest in his rural town into U.S. diplomatic custody in Beijing more than a week ago, setting off a diplomatic standoff. Under still-evolving arrangements announced Friday by Washington and Beijing, Chen may be able to leave to study in the United States.

"Since the Chinese government has promised to safeguard my constitutionally provided rights and freedom and safety, I feel that they will fulfill their commitments because it is after all an agreement between two countries," Chen said.

Chen sounded more relaxed and optimistic than on Friday morning before details of the deal were announced, when he told The Associated Press that he was in a "dangerous situation" because he had not been able to meet with American officials for two days.

The activist, who is in a Beijing hospital where he was taken to receive medical care and was joined by his wife and two children, said he has asked hospital staff to help him with the paperwork for him and his family to obtain travel documents.

"I entrusted the hospital with telling the relevant people or department that I have asked them to handle it on my behalf, because I am lying on the bed and I can't move and my friends can't come and see me, so what can I do? I can only ask them," he said.

Chen suffered three broken bones in his foot when he was escaping from his rural village, a journey that involved scaling walls and making his way through fields and a forest, then being chased by security agents in Beijing. His foot is now in a cast.

Later Monday, U.S.-funded radio broadcaster Voice of America reported that Chen's nephew Chen Kegui had been detained as part of a criminal investigation into a clash he had with officials in the Chen family's village of Dongshigu in Shandong.

Several officials reportedly broke into Chen Kegui's home last Thursday after discovering his uncle had fled house arrest. Chen Kegui brandished knives and slashed at them, inflicting injuries, according to an earlier local government statement.

DOWN TIME
Office workers and a cat rest in a park in Tokyo Monday afternoon, May 7, 2012. AP

Taliban kill 14 Pakistani troops, string up heads

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan (AP)—Taliban fighters killed 14 Pakistani soldiers in a key militant sanctuary along the Afghan border, beheaded all but one of them and hung two of the heads from wooden poles in the center of town, officials said Monday.

The killings in Miran Shah, the main town in the North Waziristan tribal area, highlight the dilemma facing the military in dealing with an area used by both the country's fiercest enemy, the Pakistani Taliban, and Afghan and Pakistani militants believed to be close to the government who are battling U.S.-led forces in neighboring Afghanistan.

The U.S. has repeatedly demanded that Pakistan launch an offensive in North Waziristan, especially against the so-called Haqqani network. Pakistan has promised to do so in the future, but claims its forces are stretched too thin right now fighting the Pakistani Taliban in other parts of the tribal region.

"Something has to be done, and it's in the offing," Lt. Gen. Khalid Rabbani, the army's top commander in the northwest, told The Associated Press in an interview Monday. "North Waziristan is the only place left" that hasn't been the target of an operation, he said.

Many analysts believe Pakistan is reluctant to target militants in North Waziristan with whom it has strong historical ties and could be useful allies in Afghanistan after foreign forces withdraw. But those militants are also allies with the Pakistani Taliban, complicating matters even further.

On Sunday, the Taliban ambushed a security checkpoint in Miran Shah, killing nine Pakistani soldiers, the army said. Militants had been firing on the checkpoint for the past few days before they ambushed it, the army added.

When authorities finally retrieved the bodies of the dead soldiers, they found that they had been beheaded, said intelligence officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

The army retaliated Sunday with helicopter gunships that pounded suspected militant hideouts and also hit three houses and a mosque in the town, said intelligence officials. Three civilians were killed and 20 were wounded in the helicopter attacks, they said. It's unclear how many militants were killed.

South Korea finds smuggled capsules contain human flesh

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea has seized thousands of smuggled drug capsules filled with powdered flesh from dead babies, which some people believe can cure disease, officials said Monday.

The capsules were made in northeastern China from babies whose bodies were chopped into small pieces and dried on stoves before being turned into powder, the Korea Customs Service said.

Customs officials refused to say where the dead babies came from or who made the capsules, citing possible diplomatic friction with Beijing. Chinese officials ordered an investigation into the production of drugs made from dead fetuses or newborns last year.

The customs office has discovered 35 smuggling attempts since August of about 17,450 capsules disguised as stamina boosters, and some people believe them to be a panacea for disease, the customs service said in a statement. The capsules of human flesh, however, contained bacteria and other harmful ingredients.

The smugglers told customs officials they believed the capsules were ordinary stamina boosters and did not know the ingredients or manufacturing process.

Ethnic Koreans from northeastern China who now live in South Korea were intending to use the capsules themselves or share them with other Korean-Chinese, a customs official said. They were carried in luggage or sent by international mail.

The capsules were all confiscated but no one has been punished because the amount was deemed small and they weren't intended for sale, said the customs official, who requested anonymity, citing department rules.

China's State Food and Drug Administration and its Health Ministry did not immediately respond to questions faxed to them Monday. Chinese media identify northeastern China as the source of such products, especially Jilin province which abuts North Korea.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Maids die in Singapore; Indonesia calls for safety

SINGAPORE (AP)—Eight Indonesian maids have fallen to their deaths from high-rise apartments in Singapore this year, and officials at the Indonesia Embassy are pushing for a ban on cleaning outside windows. Indonesian Embassy Counsellor Sukmo Yuwono told the Associated Press on Tuesday that he has asked employment agencies to include a clause in work contracts that prohibits maids from cleaning the outside of windows or hanging laundry from high-rise apartments. Yuwono said the maids are "dying for nothing." Yuwono said Singapore's Manpower Ministry is working with Indonesian officials to identify and possibly blacklist agencies and employers who don't ensure maid safety. Indonesia supplies about half of Singapore's 200,000 maids.

Lawyer: Thai jailed for anti-royalty texts dies

BANGKOK (AP)—A lawyer for a man sentenced to 20 years for sending text messages deemed insulting to the monarchy says his client has died. Amphon Tangnoppakul was in his 60s and became known as "Uncle SMS" when a Thai court issued the verdict in his case in late 2011. It was the heaviest sentence ever handed down in Thailand for a so-called lese majeste case. Amphon's lawyer Anon Numpa said Tuesday that the cause of death was not yet known and he was not sure when his client died. He said Amphon's wife learned about it early Tuesday during a visit to the Bangkok prison where he was being held.

Afghan flash flood kills at least 21 in north

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—A flash flood swept through a village in northern Afghanistan, killing 21 people, many of them members of a wedding party, officials said Monday. People in Dhy Marda village in Sari Pul province were gathered for the celebration late Sunday when heavy rains caused floodwaters to rush down the mountains, said Sayed Jahangir Kramat, the deputy police chief for the province. He said the 21 dead included men, women and children. He said four people were missing, rejecting reports that as many as 80 people could not be found. He said 45 homes were destroyed and another 150 were damaged.

Anti-terrorism police officer killed in Pakistan

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP)—A police official says gunmen killed a senior anti-terrorism police officer in southwest Pakistan. Hamid Shakil says two men on a motorcycle opened fire on Shah Nawaz Khan on Tuesday outside his house in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province. Khan was deputy head of Baluchistan's Crimes Investigation Department, which works exclusively on cases dealing with terrorism and sectarian violence. Shakil says Khan had received threats from militant groups but would not identify them.

Al-Jazeera says China has expelled reporter

BEIJING (AP)—Al-Jazeera's sole English-language reporter in China has been expelled, the pan-Arab news network said Tuesday. It's the first time since 1998 that Beijing has kicked out an accredited foreign journalist. Melissa Chan's expulsion is seen as a hardening of China's attitude toward international media it views as a threat to the authoritarian government's authority and global image. The move "seems to be taking China's anti-media policies to a new level," Bob Dietz, the Asia coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists, said in a statement. Qatar-based Al-Jazeera said in a statement that it had no choice but to close its English-language service's bureau because Chan's press credentials and visa were not extended. Chan is a U.S. citizen who worked for the network in China for five years.

World

Israeli president: Early election canceled

By IAN DEITCH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM (AP)—In a stunning reversal, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called off early elections Tuesday after reaching an agreement to bring the main opposition party into the government, a move that puts a more moderate face on his hawkish coalition.

The deal to include the centrist Kadima Party, announced just a day after Netanyahu set early elections in motion, could have implications for a possible Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities and help Netanyahu fend off challenges over an array of issues from partners in his current coalition.

President Shimon Peres' office confirmed media reports early Tuesday that Netanyahu had struck an agreement with Kadima, parliament's largest party. There was no comment from Netanyahu, who had announced Monday that he would seek to move up national elections to Sept. 4, more than a year ahead of schedule. Netanyahu's current governing coalition has been dominated by religious and nationalist partners that failed to seriously engage the Palestinians. The coalition has also been criticized for promoting a series of bills that appeared to stifle dissent by targeting dovish groups critical of government policy.

Netanyahu

Kadima had resisted joining the government when former Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was at the party's helm, because she did not think Netanyahu was serious about reaching a peace deal with the Palestinians.

But Livni, who had been chief peace negotiator under the preceding Kadima-led government, recently lost her bid to remain party leader to Shaul Mofaz, a former military chief and defense minister who will become deputy prime minister under the new coalition agreement.

Last week, she quit the party, whose fortunes flagged under her leadership and have not revived since Mofaz took over, according to the latest polls. The surveys predicted the party would drop to about a dozen seats in parliament, compared to its current 28.

Mofaz, too, has accused Netanyahu of not seeking a peace deal forcefully enough, and has also been a vocal critic of any unilateral Israeli military attack on Iran's nuclear sites.

With Kadima in the government, Netanyahu could have broader backing to make concessions to the Palestinians and face added pressure to show restraint on Iran, though Mofaz has a history of flip-flopping.

Israel, like the West, thinks Iran is developing nuclear weapons, a charge Tehran denies. But Israel repeatedly has hinted it might strike Iran if it concludes U.S.-led diplomacy and sanctions have failed.

Netanyahu has hinted at the possibility of an Israeli military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities and has repeatedly insisted on Israel's sovereign right to act if it feels threatened. He has not, however, made an open threat.

Israel considers Iran a threat to its survival because of its nuclear and missile development programs, frequent references to Israel's destruction by Iranian leaders, and Tehran's support of violent anti-Israeli groups in Lebanon and Gaza.

Reports of Netanyahu's agreement to bring Kadima into his government emerged shortly after Israel's parliament held debates long into the night over whether to break up.

The agreement stabilizes a coalition that had frayed over domestic issues such as drafting the ultra-Orthodox into the military and tearing down illegally built structures in West Bank settlements. With Kadima in, Netanyahu's government will encompass 94 of parliament's 120 lawmakers.

Kadima agreed to join Netanyahu's government on condition it supports scrapping widespread exemptions for ultra-Orthodox Jews, media said. Disputes within his coalition over drafting the ultra-Orthodox had been a main reason Netanyahu decided to bring forward the election date.

The new government "will try to reach a formula acceptable to all," said Yakov Betzalel, a spokesman for the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, which opposes a blanket draft.

Parliament Speaker Reuven Rivlin, a veteran of Israeli politics, said he had never seen such a last-minute political upheaval. "This is good for Israel because it brings stability, he said on Army Radio as he left parliament before sunrise.

Israel's Labor Party called the move "ridiculous" and said it would remain in the opposition.

Putin sworn in as Russia's president for 6 years

MOSCOW (AP)—Vladimir Putin took the oath of office in a brief but regal Kremlin ceremony on Monday, while on the streets outside thousands of helmeted riot police prevented hundreds of demonstrators from protesting his return to the presidency.

Putin, 59, has ruled Russia since 2000, first as president and then during the past four years as prime minister. The new, now six-year term will keep him in power until 2018, with the option of running for a fourth term.

"I consider serving the fatherland and our people to be the meaning of my whole life and my duty," Putin said in addressing 3,000 guests in a Kremlin hall glittering with gold leaf.

Despite unprecedented security measures in the center of Moscow, where streets were closed to traffic and passengers prevented from exiting subway stations, at least 1,000 opposition activists tried to protest along the route Putin's motorcade took to the Kremlin. Police picked out anyone wearing the white ribbons that are the symbol of the anti-Putin protest movement.

AP
Vladimir Putin takes the oath of office during his inauguration as new Russia's president in the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow on Monday, May 7, 2012.

The demonstrators, separated into several groups, were met by helmeted riot police. At least 120 were detained, including opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, who was grabbed while sitting at an outdoor cafe. In the evening, dozens of protesters gathered outside the presidential administration, and police detained them one by one, escorting them onto buses.

Putin's inauguration came a day after an opposition protest drew more than 20,000 people, fewer than the mass demonstrations in the months that preceded his March election but still a sign that the anger over Putin's heavy-handed return to the Kremlin has not faded.

Sunday's protest turned violent when some demonstrators tried to march toward the Kremlin and riot police beat back the crowds with batons and detained more than 400 people. The use of force after the winter's peaceful rallies indicates that Putin may take a harder line toward the protesters now that he is once again president.

More than 100 of those detained Sunday were men under the age of 27, and thus eligible for military conscription, and at least 70 of them were ordered to report to draft offices, the Interfax news agency reported, citing a military official.

After taking the oath of office with his right hand on a red-bound copy of Russia's constitution, which had been carried into the hall by goose-stepping Kremlin guards, Putin stated his commitment to democracy.

Winner of Mexican presidential debate? Sexy model

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Who won Mexico's presidential debate? According to the media and Twitter frenzy, at least, the victor wasn't any candidate but a curvaceous model in a tight gown who puzzled millions by appearing on stage for less than 30 seconds during the showdown.

Julia Orayen has posed nude for Playboy and appeared barely dressed in other media, but she made her mark on Mexican minds Sunday night by carrying an urn filled with bits of paper determining the order that candidates would speak.

Not that viewers were looking at the urn.

She wore a tight, white dress with a wide, tear-drop cutout that revealed her ample decolletage. The image was splashed across newspaper front pages and websites by Monday.

"The best was the girl in white with the cleavage at the beginning," tweeted former Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda, who is also a New York University professor.

Orayen's name jockeyed for third and fourth place throughout the day under Twitter's Mexico City trends, where a click revealed her previous work, including an almost-nude spread commemorating Mexican Independence Day in which she appears in minimal garb modeled on images of Mexican founding father Jose Maria Morelos.

Alfredo Figueroa, director of the Federal Electoral Institute responsible for organizing the debate, blamed the incident on a production associate hired by the institute to help with the debate. The institute later issued an apology to Mexican citizens and the candidates for the woman's dress.

Figueroa told MVS radio that he had requested an aide in "sober dress."

Interviewed by the Cadena Tres TV network, Orayen said the production team gave her instructions to wear a long, white dress, but she picked it out from her own closet.

AP
In this screen grab taken from Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute's YouTube channel, Julia Orayen, second from right, carries a box to presidential candidates containing paper for them to take to assign their speaking order at the start of a presidential candidate debate in Mexico City, Sunday, May 6, 2012.

Hugo Chavez looks to God as cancer clouds future

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has spent much of his career praising the socialist ideas of famed atheists such as Karl Marx and Fidel Castro. Now in the thick of a prolonged battle against cancer, however, the leftist leader is drawing inspiration more than ever from a spiritual leader: Jesus Christ.

Chavez has been praying for divine intervention during increasingly infrequent appearances on television, holding up a crucifix while vowing to overcome his illness. He says living with cancer has made him "more Christian," talk that has coincided with speculation by some Venezuelans that cancer might cut short his bid for reelection in October.

Chavez's voice cracked with emotion as he bade farewell to aides and supporters in Caracas on April 30 before leaving for what he said would be his final round of cancer treatment in Cuba.

"I'm sure our Christ will do it again, continuing making the miracle," Chavez said as he raised his cross to his lips and kissed it, prompting applause from an audience of aides.

If Chavez survives cancer, political analysts say his increasing religiosity could pay election-year dividends in a country where Catholicism remains influential.

"Given that he cannot hide the illness, but he can hide its characteristics and danger, he's decided to take as much advantage of it as he can, and one advantage is the symbolic and religious issue," said Luis Vicente Leon, a Venezuelan pollster and analyst. "He'll present himself as the chosen one, the man who has been cured and healed by the Lord to continue governing the country."

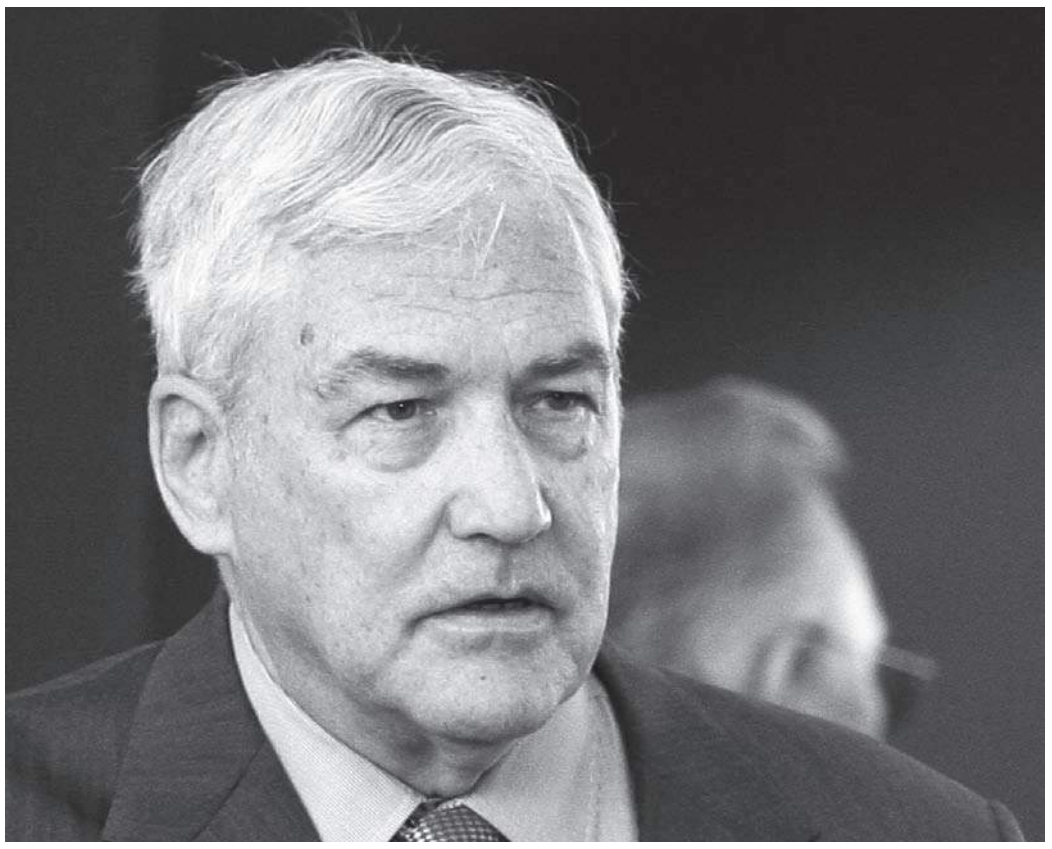
The president has alternated between emotional fragility and optimism in public, mentioning God and Jesus nearly every time he shows up on TV.

Chavez shed tears last month during a televised Mass with relatives in Venezuela, when he prayed aloud to Jesus to "give me life."

In a later appearance in Cuba, Chavez held up the same crucifix that he said helped deliver him from one of his darkest moments, a 2002 coup that briefly deposed him. He returned to the presidency within two days.

"I have great faith in what we're doing, in this intense undertaking against the illness that ambushed me last year, and I have faith, I repeat, in God," said Chavez, who looked pale and bloated.

Focus



AP

In this July 23, 2010 file photo, former media mogul Conrad Black arrives at the federal courthouse for a hearing in Chicago.

AP

In this Oct. 14, 2011 file photo, News Corp. CEO Rupert Murdoch delivers a keynote address at the National Summit on Education Reform in San Francisco.

Murdoch scandal

follows classic media baron script

By RAPHAEL SATTER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON (AP)—If the phone hacking scandal gripping Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. empire has a familiar ring, it might be because you've heard the story before. Scrappy outsider turns modest newspaper business into international media conglomerate. Ambition turns to hubris. Mogul dramatically falls from grace.

From William Randolph Hearst to Rupert Murdoch, many media barons' stories follow a familiar arc.

"He's one of a series," said James Curran, a professor of communications at Goldsmiths University in London. "He seems to me to be in the same press baron tradition."

Before Murdoch came Robert Maxwell and Conrad Black, both of whose careers at the top of the British media establishment ended in disgrace. Before those two came Lord Beaverbrook, the Daily Express owner whose excesses were lampooned by Evelyn Waugh in his 1938 novel "Scoop."

Earlier still was the New York Journal's William Randolph Hearst, who has become linked to the swashbuckling maverick at the center of Orson Wells' 1941 classic "Citizen Kane."

There are huge differences: Unlike Black and Maxwell, Hearst, Murdoch, and Beaverbrook stayed successful. The Hearst Corp. is 125 years old; News Corp. is worth $60 billion; there's still a statue to Beaverbrook in the Canadian city of Fredericton, not far from where he was raised.

But there are important parallels, too.

Britain's media tycoons came from abroad—Australia, Canada, or Eastern Europe—and rapidly became establishment figures, winning wealth, titles, and friends in high places.

Then, eventually, came the fall.

Beaverbrook's attempt to create his own political party was knocked back in the 1930s, and he found himself cast adrift following the defeat of close ally Winston Churchill in 1945.

Black's and Maxwell's careers were blighted by criminality. Maxwell, having raided his newspaper's pension fund, drowned under murky circumstances in 1991; Black was only released Friday from a U.S. prison following a 2007 conviction for cheating his shareholders.

Once one of the most powerful forces in British politics, courted by Labour and Conservative leaders alike, Murdoch also has seen his clout wither amid the scandal over illegal eavesdropping at his News of the World tabloid.

Revelations of widespread illegality there have led to the arrests of dozens of journalists and media executives, the resignations of high-flying political operatives and police leaders, and hundreds of millions of dollars in legal costs.

The narrative of the hacking scandal may echo earlier stories of overreach, but Murdoch's story has little to do with those of Black or Maxwell, said Tom Bower, who has written biographies of the latter.

"There is a sharp difference," said Bower, explaining that Murdoch built "a huge and successful business" based on hard work and sharp elbows, while his competitors failed because they had created "flimsy businesses based on fraud."

Murdoch's story bears a stronger resemblance to Beaverbrook, a turn-of-the-century entrepreneur who would help revolutionize London's Fleet Street newspapers, according to Jacques Poitras, the author of "Beaverbrook: A Shattered Legacy."

Born William Aitken in the small maritime province of New Brunswick, Beaverbrook had a modest start selling insurance and magazines door to door before moving on to bond promotion and striking it rich.

He moved to England, where he was knighted, invested in the populist Daily Express, and—with the help of innovations such as crossword puzzles, gossip columns and society pages—turned it into the biggest-selling paper in the English-speaking world. That title was later claimed by Murdoch's News of the World.

"Both men published fabulously successful newspapers, and they were good at it," Poitras said. "They knew what people wanted (and) they delivered it."

Beaverbrook became fantastically influential, serving as a powerful Cabinet minister and Churchill adviser.

"His power in the 30s and 40s in London was unmatched," said Poitras. "I don't know if you could have someone of that clout now. ... Murdoch is the only one who seems to have made waves in the same way."

Compared to Beaverbrook and Murdoch, Maxwell and Black are a "second division of press baron," said Curran, the professor of communications.

Black, a member of the Canadian elite, eventually came to own The Daily Telegraph, the Jerusalem Post, and a string of U.S. and Canadian newspapers before his embezzlement plunged his empire into crisis.

Maxwell's rags-to-riches-to-ruin story is in some respects more compelling.

Born into an Orthodox Jewish family in the destitute Carpathian mountain region of what was then known as Czechoslovakia, Maxwell narrowly escaped a Nazi concentration camp to move to London. He set up a successful publishing company and moved into politics, throwing his support behind the left-wing Labour Party.

As early as 1969, there were signs of trouble. Britain's trade department investigated Maxwell in the wake of a botched takeover deal, branding him unfit "to exercise proper stewardship of a publicly quoted company"—nearly the same language used by Labour lawmakers to condemn Murdoch in a critical report on phone hacking published last week.

Maxwell survived the trade investigation, spending the next two decades expanding his empire and racking up an enormous pile of debt. By the time his body was recovered from the waters off the Canary Islands—no one knows precisely how he died—his company was more than 2 billion pounds in the red.

Murdoch, who outmaneuvered Maxwell and Black to stay at the top of the British newspaper scene, has so far avoided falling into the same abyss that swallowed his competitors. Even his most strident critics don't accuse him of anything worse than "willful blindness." He remains at the head of a fabulously successful media company, responsible for record-smashing films like "Avatar" or TV hits such as "The Simpsons," and News Corp.'s share price is riding high.

His influence in Britain, however, has undeniably suffered. Politicians who once scrambled to kiss his hand are now lining up to boast about how independent they were. Prime Minister David Cameron, who in 2008 flew out to the tycoon's yacht to seek his blessing, acknowledged last week that "we all did too much cozying up to Rupert Murdoch."

In that respect, Murdoch's isolation—in Britain at least—seems redolent of the last scene of Citizen Kane: Successful, wealthy, but unloved.

Murdoch's empire

News Corporation

A British parliamentary panel has declared media mogul Rupert Murdoch unfit to run his company due to his nonchalant attitude toward the phone hacking practices at some of his publications.

CEO,chairman Rupert Murdoch

Oxford-educated Murdoch, 81, has a net worth of more than $8 billion

His company at a glance

News Corp. is one of the world's largest media conglomerates, second only to Walt Disney

Revenue	$33.4 billion
Net income	$2.7 billion
Profit margin	37%
Employees	51,000
Market cap (as of April 30)	$49.4 billion

Major segments

2011 revenue, in billions

Publishing $8.8

• More than 150 newspapers, including The Times (London), The Wall Street Journal, The Australian; HarperCollins book publishers

Cable programming 8.0

• Fox News Channel, Fox Sports Net, FX, Fox College Sports, National Geographic channel

Filmed entertainment 6.9

• 20th Century Fox, 20th Century Fox TV, 20th Century Fox Espanol, Fox Searchlight

Television 4.8

• Fox Broadcasting Co., 27 TV stations, various TV operations throughout the world

Satellite TV 3.8

• BSkyB (39 percent), FOXTEL, Sky Deutschland, Sky Italia

Source: News Corp., Forbes, MCT Photo Service
Graphic: Pat Carr

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Campus Life

AP surges as tool for schools raising standards

By JUSTIN POPE
AP EDUCATION WRITER

AP
In this May 1, 2012 photo, Mariatou Samou, left, a student in an Advanced Placement government class, speaks with her teacher, Kayla Morrow, during a lesson at the Academy for College and Career Exploration in Baltimore.

Not long ago, Advanced Placement exams were mostly for top students looking to challenge themselves and get a head start on college credit. Not anymore.

In the next two weeks, 2 million students will take 3.7 million end-of-year AP exams—figures well over double those from a decade ago. With no national curriculum, AP has become the de facto gold standard for high school rigor. States and high schools are pushing AP classes and exams as a way to raise standards across the board, in some cases tying AP to bonuses. And the federal government is helping cover the exam fees.

Now, AP's rapid growth is reaching even schools serving some of the most disadvantaged students. These schools are embracing AP as a comprehensive toolkit for toughening coursework, emphasizing college preparation and instilling a "culture of excellence."

If math teacher Jaime Escalante could lead low-income Los Angeles students to AP calculus glory in the story that became the 1988 film "Stand and Deliver," why not others?

The problem is, there usually isn't a Hollywood ending.

Last year, 18 percent of U.S. high school graduates passed at least one AP exam (by scoring 3 or higher on a scale of 1 to 5), up from 11 percent a decade ago.

But there also many more students falling short—way short—on the exams.

The proportion of all tests taken last year earning the minimal score of 1 increased over that time, from 13 percent to 21 percent. At many schools, virtually no students pass.

For instance, in Indiana—among the states pushing AP most aggressively, and with results close to the national average—there were still 21 school districts last year where graduates took AP exams but none passed.

Baltimore's Academy for College & Career Exploration, where 81 percent of students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch programs in 2010, added three AP classes in recent years. Over the past two years, just two of 62 exams taken by its students earned a 3.

Passing an AP exam means demonstrating college-level skill, so a high failure rate isn't necessarily surprising or alarming. Many educators insist the AP coursework preceding those exams is valuable regardless.

Still, they acknowledge the trend raises tough questions: Is pushing poorly prepared students to take college-level classes effective? Or does it just demoralize them and divert time and money better spent elsewhere?

"It's kind of an easy reform—plunk in an AP course," said University of Northern Colorado scholar Kristin Klopfenstein, who edited a recent collection of studies on the AP program. But without accompanying steps, it's not clear AP does much good, especially for students scoring 1s and 2s. "What I've observed in a lot of cases is AP programs being helicopter-dropped in with the hope that the high standards themselves would generate results."

Perhaps surprisingly, those concerns are shared by the not-for-profit College Board, which runs the AP program and has benefited from its growth (collecting $353 million in revenue from its college readiness programs, including AP exam fees, in 2009).

"Schools that are using AP in a very deliberate way to change the culture, there's something very powerful there," said Senior Vice President Trevor Packer. But as a shortcut to avoid the hard foundational work students need, AP may be a waste—or worse, a diversion (The test fee is $87, though the College Board discounts that to $53 for low-income students, who with government grants often have no cost at all.).

"The last thing we want is (schools) spending money on test fees if that's all they're spending money on," Packer said.

The AP program dates to the 1950s, but has grown rapidly in recent years to 34 subjects, from art history to Japanese. High-achieving students and parents have driven some of the growth, but mostly it's educators and policymakers. The six states now requiring high schools to offer AP include several that have struggled the most with educational achievement—Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina. (The others are Indiana and Connecticut. A half-dozen additional states require schools to offer either AP or other rigorous classes such as dual-enrollment or International Baccalaureate).

States also encourage AP in other ways. Indiana, for instance, gives schools bonuses for AP performance, and factors AP into the state's accountability formula and performance goals. Florida pays bonuses to teachers for each student earning a qualifying score. Seven states require public colleges to award credit or placement based on AP exam scores. Students, meanwhile, usually get extra weighting on their GPAs and improved chances for admission to selective colleges.

Increasingly common are school districts like East Noble in Kendallville, Ind., where the high school now offers 11 AP classes, up from three a few years ago. The district's pass rate on statewide tests ranks just above the bottom quarter in Indiana, state figures show. Superintendent Ann Linson started pushing AP when she was the high school principal, dropping a requirement that AP enrollees come from the top 25 percent of students.

"I was really put out by that," she said. "I believe every student should have the ability to be part of a more challenging course." Last year, about 42 percent of East Noble graduates took an AP exam, roughly double the percentage three years before. But the 14 percent of graduates who earned a passing score (close to the state average) was about the same as before. Indiana's statewide goal is 25 percent of graduates earning AP credit.

"If a student pushes themselves at a higher level, even if they receive a C or D, it's going to better prepare them for life after school," Linson said.

Why has AP become a gold standard? One reason is schools can slap the label "honors" on any class, but AP requires outside validation, said David Conley, a University of Oregon professor and CEO of the Educational Policy Improvement Center. To offer official AP courses, teachers and principals must develop a curriculum that the College Board attests meets standards set by college faculty (Conley's group does that validation work for the College Board). Many AP teachers also undergo special training.

Also, Conley says, the seemingly endless battery of state-level tests that have emerged over the last two decades focus on setting a "floor"—minimum skills for all students. AP lets schools and policymakers talk about raising the "ceiling," elevating students beyond the bare minimum and pushing them toward college.

One other possible factor: For years, Newsweek magazine used a school's number of AP tests per graduate as the sole factor for inclusion on its annual list of "Best American High Schools". (That list's inventor, Jay Mathews, moved it to the Washington Post in 2011. Newsweek developed a new list with a formula where AP factors into three categories totaling 40 percent).

Nationally, 56 percent of AP exams taken by the high school class of 2011 earned a 3 or higher, but there are wide disparities. The mean score is 3.01 for white students and 1.94 for blacks. In New Hampshire, almost three-quarters of exams earn a 3 or higher; in Mississippi, it's under a third. In the District of Columbia, more than half of exams score a 1.

At Detroit's Mumford High School last year, none of 62 AP exams earned higher than a 1. But at the nearby Renaissance magnet high school, a quarter of the 113 AP exams earned a 3 or higher, and the school had the second most black students scoring 3 or higher in literature in the country.

When Kayla Morrow began teaching social studies at Baltimore's Academy for College & Career Exploration five years ago, the school offered no AP courses and barely any honors.

"We were just kind of graduating kids from high school and just pushing them out the door and just hoping something positive would happen," Morrow said. When a grant arrived for Morrow and others to get training and develop AP courses, "pretty much all the teachers were like, `yes, we really need this, we all did this when we were in high school, it's a crime that we don't have this.'"

Last year 36 students took AP exams in three subjects, scoring on average 1.4.

The AP government class Morrow teaches, she says, isn't just harder than regular classes. It's fundamentally different, and—surprisingly—less test-driven.

"What AP is really trying to teach you is for a lot of things, there's really not a right and wrong answer. It's, `how do you get to that?'" she said, adding the AP training improved her teaching in regular classes, too.

As for not passing the exams, "students take ownership of that," she said. "They'll work harder for you. In fact, they'll be more appreciative for knowing where they stand."

Sean Martin, who helped start an AP literature program at Heritage High School in Baltimore before moving this year to another school, said some of his AP students read at a seventh-grade level.

"I knew for a lot of them ... it was going to be very difficult to get them even to the level of a 2," he said. Still, he said, simply putting students who want to push themselves together in a class with a goal is valuable.

"We set a higher bar and we could do things a little differently, and really have meaningful class discussions," he said. Classes "take on a different feel when every student in the room is success-oriented."

The two teachers note advanced college credit isn't the only worthy goal: Both have heard former students report their AP preparation helped them place out of remedial college classes, which also saves time and tuition.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Students of Saipan International School show off the ribbons and medals they won in the MathCourt competitions held at the Dandan Elementary School.

SIS students shine in MathCourt competition

Students of Saipan International School once again emerged winners in the Regional MathCourt competition rounds one and two held on April 28 and May 5 at Dandan Elementary School.

SIS fifth grader Eric Kiser took home a bronze medal on Saturday in the Regional finals. This is the second year in a row he has gotten this honor. Students placed first, second, third, fourth and fifth throughout the two days.

Over 900 students from public and private schools participated in this school year's MathCourt competition. To have 14 SIS students win ribbons and medals in the finals is an amazing job. Congratulations go out to all the ribbon winners and participants throughout this year's Math Court season. ***(PR)***

K-2 DIVISION
Ravi Richards, 1st
Renee Kiser, 1st
Raven-mae Driver, 1st
Cevina Hwang, 2nd
Julianna Florencondia, 2nd
Charlie Doty, 3rd

3-5 DIVISION
Alex Kim, 1st
David Park, 1st
Eric Kiser, 2nd
Daniel Kim, 2nd
Anna Calvert, 2nd
Alex Park, 3rd
Grace Choi, 4th
Malika Miyawaki, 5th

Life & Style

At home with Nobel laureate Toni Morrison

By HILLEL ITALIE
AP NATIONAL WRITER

AP
A 2012 photo released by Alfred A. Knopf, shows author Toni Morrison. As she gets older, Morrison says, the world becomes more interesting and more distressing.

GRAND VIEW-ON-HUDSON, New York (AP)—The Hudson River extends like the sun from the back of Toni Morrison's house, illuminated and infinite, undimmed by an unseasonably drab afternoon.

"It's interesting and soothing, and it changes constantly," Morrison says from the comfort of an armchair. "And at night, with the stars and the moon ..."

The Nobel laureate has lived in this converted boathouse since the late 1970s, when she spotted a "For Sale" sign while driving by. Her commitment was tested when the house burned down in 1993, destroying everything. But she had the house rebuilt and upgraded and so enjoys a setting both spacious and personal, with bookcases and paintings, plants and carvings, a patio and private dock.

The 81-year-old Morrison is in a relaxed, informal mood, her laugh easy and husky. You might mistake her for a neighbor ready for gardening until you see the pictures of her with James Baldwin, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Elie Wiesel, among others, or learn that the wooden table by her chair was a prop from the film version of "Beloved," her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel.

Morison does not need to worry about recognition. Nobel judges have honored her, and so has Oprah Winfrey, whose book club picks have helped Morrison's novels sell millions. A Toni Morrison Society organizes conferences about her work and sponsors a Toni Morrison Book Prize. She has written children's stories and has been the subject of one, Douglas Century's "Toni Morrison." Two presidential contenders, Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton, sought her support in 2008, and Obama will soon present her with a Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor. Her play "Desdemona," a collaboration with director Peter Sellars and the Malian singer-songwriter Rokia Traore, will be staged in London during the Summer Olympics.

The legend gets the glory; the real person works. Morrison has a new novel, "Home," a brief, poetic story of Frank Money, a traumatized Korean War veteran who returns to the U.S. in the 1950s. Morrison has long used fiction as a private and alternative history, whether of the Civil War ("Beloved"), the 1920s ("Jazz") or colonial times ("A Mercy"). With "Home," she wanted to add some truth—about war, about racism—to the standard '50s narrative.

"I was really trying to take off that scab, or that veil, or whatever it is, off the '50s," she says. "We're told that it was good times, post-war, GI Bill, people had jobs and the television was full of happy stories and so on, and that's it."

Like "Beloved," ''Song of Solomon" and other Morrison novels, the book is a journey and a reckoning. Using bus money given to him by a pastor, Money travels from the Pacific Northwest to Chicago to his dreaded hometown, Lotus, Georgia, "the worst place in the world," where nobody "knew anything or wanted to learn anything." Warned from the start that the North is no less racist than the South, he encounters violence and segregation and the lawlessness of police. Once in Georgia, he is almost relieved. At least the pace is "human," Money observes. There was "time to instruct one another, pray for one another, and chastise children in the pews of a hundred churches."

Morrison, a native of Ohio, never lived in Georgia. But for "Home" she drew upon stories from her father, a Georgia native, and from her memories of the South when she was an undergraduate at Howard University, based in Washington. She was on tour with fellow theater students in the early '50s and was moved by how blacks took care of her and each other, a bond dramatized in "Home" and many of her works. She knew what to expect from the whites in the South, but the revelation was how "lovely and generous and capable" the blacks were.

"If we arrived at a town where the faculty had made arrangements to spend the night and either the place we thought was nice, wasn't, or they didn't want the students to stay there, one of them would go into a phone booth. They would check the yellow pages for a black church and then call up a minister and say, 'We're from Howard University and we're a little chagrined because we don't have a place to say,'" Morrison says. "And the pastor would say, 'Call me back in 10 minutes.' And in 10 or 15 minutes he had rounded up his parishioners to take us in. We would go into these houses. And the women, they just fed us, took care of us, put us on these sweet-smelling sheets and cooked, and wouldn't take any money. We had to slip money under their pillows.

"And that happened everywhere. 'Where do we eat in this town that has no places where blacks can eat?' And somebody would say, 'Here is a man who was a chef at the Waldorf Astoria, but he's retired and he cooks sometimes for visitors.' And you go to his house and get the best meal of your life. But that was within the community. There really was a community, there really was a neighborhood."

Morrison has spent much of her life in the North. After graduating from Howard, she worked for years as an editor for Random House, then debuted as an author with "The Bluest Eye," published in 1970. Her breakthrough came in 1977 with "Song of Solomon," a Book-of-the-Month Club selection praised by New York Times critic John Leonard as a masterpiece akin to music. Her name reached ever higher. "Beloved" won the Pulitzer in 1988. The Nobel came five years later.

As she gets older, Morrison says, the world becomes more interesting and more distressing. She is appalled at some of the remarks about Obama and the speculation that he was not a U.S. citizen. But nature, and its mysteries, she responds to more than ever—the water, mountains, her garden. She watches "Planet Earth" on the Discovery Channel and marvels how it took "millions of years" for humans to evolve from "that thingy down there at the bottom of the sea."

Saying that her writing process was unchanged by the Nobel—after a "few mental tricks" cleared the fog of success from her mind—Morrison tries to challenge herself with every book. In "Home," she has Frank Money speak directly to the author, admitting that he has not been honest about his story. For her next novel, she wants to write about a black intellectual, a break from the uneducated characters who usually appear in her work.

"When I'm not thinking about a novel, or not actually writing it, it's not very good; the 21st century is not a very nice place. I need it (writing) to just stay steady, emotionally," she says.

"When I finished 'The Bluest Eye,' ... I was not pleased. I remember feeling sad. And then I thought, 'Oh, you know, everybody's talking about "sisterhood,"' I wanted to write about what women friends are really like. (The inspiration for "Sula," her second novel). All of a sudden the whole world was a real interesting place. Everything in it was something I could use or discard. It had shape. The thing is—that's how I live here."

Home.

"I guess that's home."

Model, billionaire settle NYC child support fight

NEW YORK (AP)—In the midst of a trial that brought tales of the high life and high fashion to family court, supermodel Linda Evangelista and a billionaire French businessman have reached an agreement to end their child support fight, their lawyers said Monday.

Evangelista, Francois-Henri Pinault and their attorneys were mum about the details, which they planned to give to a magistrate on Tuesday.

"Everybody is very glad that it's over," Pinault lawyer David Aronson said.

The settlement came in the midst of a trial over how much, if anything, Pinault should pay toward the care of their 5-year-old son. Pinault is the CEO of a company that owns Gucci, Yves St. Laurent and other top-flight fashion lines; he's now married to actress Salma Hayek.

Both Pinault and Evangelista had testified at the trial, answering questions that delved into her career, his high-flying finances and his limited relationship with the boy. Evangelista had been due to continue testifying Monday.

The two sides negotiated all weekend and into Monday morning, according to a person familiar with the negotiations. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private talks.

Evangelista

In legal papers, Evangelista had said she was spending $46,000 a month on armed bodyguards, a 24-hour-a-day nanny and other expenses for the boy, Augustin, nicknamed Augie. He was born in 2006 after a four-month relationship; Pinault said he and Evangelista spent only about seven days together in all.

Evangelista's lawyer said she willingly paid all the child's expenses at first, but she now needs some help. While Evangelista—who once quipped that supermodels "don't wake up for less than $10,000 a day"—testified that she still can command about $100,000 to walk a runway, attorney William Beslow said her roughly $1.8 million-a-year income sank last year because a major contract with L'Oreal ended.

"Ms. Evangelista is not looking to piggyback the lifestyle of Mr. Pinault," Beslow said in an opening statement last week. He said she wasn't asking for any particular amount.

As part of the family behind luxury-brands conglomerate PPR, Pinault makes about $4 million a year, and Forbes estimates his family's net worth at $13 billion. He wears a $100,000 watch, dropped about $52,000 on a 12-day vacation to Bora Bora and bought himself about $62,000 in clothes in a single year, according to his testimony.

Pinault, who has a 4-year-old daughter with Hayek and two other children from a previous marriage, legally recognized Augie as his son in 2007. Pinault said Evangelista asked for what he considered an unreasonable amount of child support, he countered with another offer, and he didn't get a response for years. She went to court in 2010.

A look at celebrity child support payments

NEW YORK (AP)—Supermodel Linda Evangelista and billionaire French businessman Francois-Henri Pinault have reached a settlement in their child support fight over the care of their 5-year-old son. Details aren't available, but Evangelista had said in court papers that she was spending $46,000 a month on his expenses, including bodyguards and a 24-hour nanny.

A list of some celebrities who have had hefty child and/or spousal support amounts to pay:

■ Charlie Sheen: As part of his 2011 divorce settlement from Brooke Mueller, Sheen was to pay $55,000 per month for the support of their twin sons. In June 2011, a Los Angeles judge ordered Sheen's former bosses at Warner Bros. Television to garnish the money from any payments made to the former "Two and a Half Men" star.

■ Nas: In December 2009, the rapper was ordered to pay more than $51,000 per month to his ex-wife, singer Kelis, and their son.

■ Martin Brodeur: In March 2009, the New Jersey Devils goalie was ordered to pay his ex-wife $500,000 a year in alimony until 2020, as well as $132,000 in annual child support.

■ Russell Simmons: In February 2009, the hip-hop mogul agreed to pay $40,000 per month in child support for his daughters Ming and Aoki with ex-wife Kimora Lee Simmons. The payments were to continue until both girls reach 19 1/2.

■ Britney Spears: In July 2008, months after erratic behavior landed her in the hospital and saw her father appointed conservator of her estate, the pop singer reached a settlement with ex-husband Kevin Federline that had her paying him $20,000 per month in child support.

Christina Tosi named rising star chef by Beards

NEW YORK (AP)—Compost, "crack" and something called cereal milk are unlikely ingredients that have propelled Christina Tosi to the head of her culinary class.

The protege and dessert maven of uber chef-of-the-moment David Chang was named rising star chef of the year on Monday by the James Beard Foundation, an honor earned largely by her knack for crafting unusual sweet treats—including soft serve ice cream made from milk flavored by breakfast cereal—and the almost fanatical following they have generated.

But garnering one of the so-called Oscars of the food world—one of more than 20 awarded Monday—didn't change Tosi's sense of the simplicity of what she does.

"For me, it's just about creating things that we feel really attached to," Tosi said during the 25th annual Beard Foundation awards. "The style that we do it is finding a flavor, a texture that we feel attached to and giving it back in a way that we think is cute or playful or approachable and at the end of it of course it's delicious and you want to come back for it.

"And that's where we begin and we end with it," she said."

Tosi oversees desserts, breads and ice cream for Chang's Momofuku restaurant group, and is best known as the woman behind his Momofuku Milk Bar. That's where you can find her so-called compost cookies, oversized treats rich with coffee grounds, potato chips and pretzels, and her sticky-salty-sweet "crack pie," which is as addictive as its name implies.

The James Beard awards honor those who follow in the footsteps of Beard, considered the dean of American cooking when he died in 1985. Monday's ceremony honored chefs and restaurants; a similar event on Friday was held for book and other media awards.

AP

Christina Tosi, of Momofuku Milk Bar in New York, poses with her Rising Star Chef of the Year medal during the James Beard Foundation Awards, Monday, May 7, 2012, in New York.

The foundation's outstanding chef award went to Daniel Humm, the chef behind New York's Eleven Madison Park. Humm, a native of Switzerland, has spent his career amassing awards. Most recently, his restaurant—which has four stars from the New York Times and three from the Michelin Guide—was named No. 10 in the world by Restaurant magazine.

Though Eleven Madison Park—a veteran of several Beard awards over the years—has earned high praise since it opened in 1998, most consider it to have shined brightest since 2006, when Humm took over the kitchen, bringing with him an inventive, yet classically French style.

Eleven Madison Park is best known for its tasting-style menu that lists dishes only by key ingredients and encourages diners to work with the chef to create individualized meals.

Humm beat out Chang, Gary Danko of Restaurant Gary Danko in San Francisco, Paul Kahan in Chicago, Donald Link of Herbsaint in New Orleans, and Nancy Silverton of Pizzeria Mozza in Los Angeles. Last year's winner was Jose Andres, the man credited with popularizing tapas in the United States.

Boulevard restaurant in San Francisco was named outstanding restaurant of the year. Opened by chef Nancy Oakes on the San Francisco waterfront in 1993, Boulevard's cuisine blends regional American cooking with French style. Last year's outstanding restaurant honor went to Eleven Madison Park.

The best new restaurant award went to Grant Achatz' second—and wildly different—Chicago restaurant, Next, which has come to be defined as much by the food served there as by the way it handles reservations (if you can call them that).

You don't reserve tables at Next, you purchase tickets, much as you would for a concert. Diners pay in advance for a seating on a particular day and time. What they are served varies, as the notoriously modernist Achatz changes the menu every three months. Last year, the best new restaurant honor went to Jean-Georges Vongerichten's ABC Kitchen in New York.

The group's Lifetime Achievement award this year went to Wolfgang Puck, the pioneer of California cuisine whose menu for the annual Academy Awards Governors Ball is almost as eagerly anticipated as the awards themselves. Puck has won multiple honors from the foundation over the years and is the only chef to have twice received its Most Outstanding Chef award.

Puck, whose cooking combines classic French technique with a focus on seasonal and local ingredients, has been an iconic voice in California cuisine. Born in Austria, he moved to Los Angeles in 1975. In 1982, he opened Spago, the restaurant for which he remains best known. Today, he has 20 restaurants around the country.

The organization's Humanitarian of the Year honor went to Chicago chef Charlie Trotter, who earlier this year announced that he will close his acclaimed eponymous restaurant after it celebrates its 25th anniversary in August. Trotter plans to return to school to earn a master's degree in philosophy.

Trotter was honored Monday for his work with children, including raising $3 million via The Charlie Trotter Culinary Education Foundation to help pay for needy students to attend culinary school. Trotter has said he has not ruled out opening another restaurant after completing his degree.

"All of us in this room that are interested in hospitality and gastronomy and service and cuisine," he said during Monday's ceremony. "But what's the point if you're not going to give something away? You can make a difference. That's the fun part."

Stars dress for Wintour-hosted, Prada-themed gala

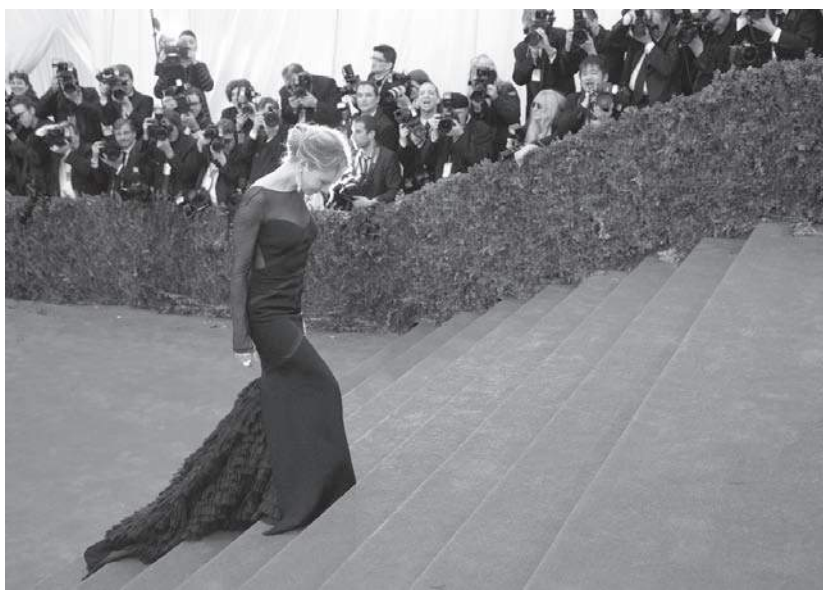
NEW YORK (AP)—It's known as one of the most glamorous red carpets of the year, with movie stars, models and even a few star football quarterbacks putting on their most fashion-forward outfits for the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute gala.

Gisele Bundchen and Tom Brady, Jessica Biel and Justin Timberlake, Rihanna, Gwyneth Paltrow, Sarah Jessica Parker, Heidi Klum, Tim Tebow and Florence Welch were among those to weave through the tented grand Fifth Avenue entrance to celebrate the new fashion exhibit that compares and contrasts the designs of two Italian women: Miuccia Prada, who wore a pantsuit to the event, and the late Elsa Schiaparelli.

Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of Vogue, serves as hostess of the event, and she wore a white gown with lobster-motif gold embroidery by Prada. Carey Mulligan, Wintour's co-chairwoman this year, wore a Prada cocktail dress with metallic fish-scale beading, and Gwyneth Paltrow had on a steel-blue Prada dress with heavily embellished pockets.

Among others donning Prada: Eva Mendes, Biel, Uma Thurman and Linda Evangelista.

Unlike other big celebrity red carpets, where designers just want to hear the stars utter their names as the creators of their dresses, they are the A-list dates here. Michael Kors escorted Hilary Swank, wearing a red halter gown; Parker, in a metallic floral-print gown with long sleeves and belt, came with Valentino; and singer Lana Del Ray, cloaked in a long black cape, came with Joseph Altuzarra.



AP

Renee Zellweger arrives at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute gala benefit, celebrating Elsa Schiaparelli and Miuccia Prada, Monday, May 7, 2012 in New York.

Jason Wu brought model Karlie Kloss, who wore a mostly hot-pink gown with an underlay of black beaded lace; Karolina Kurkova, in a rose-gold sequin gown and beaded cap, attended with Rachel Zoe; and Doutzen Kroes wore a one-shouldered, black-and-white gown as she walked arm-in-arm with Roland Mouret.

January Jones could have stopped traffic in her bright yellow custom Atelier Versace bustier gown, and model Coco Rocha also went the bright route, matching pink curls in her hair to the tank top she wore under a vintage taxi-yellow suit.

Other fashion moments:

■ Scarlett Johansson in a custom bustier gown embroidered with gold thread and pearls and a long tulle skirt by Dolce & Gabbana.

■ Ashley Greene in an off-the-shoulder Grecian gown in white silk with chiffon pleats and fringe by Donna Karan, who also made Nina Dobrev's black-and-gold asymmetrical gown with a pooling train inspired by a gown Paltrow used as a costume in "Great Expectations."

■ Bundchen in a high-slit black gown by Givenchy designer Riccardo Tisci, who also dressed Liv Tyler, Kanye West, Rooney Mara, Alicia Keys and Beyonce, who wore a sheer black gown with strategic beading and a purple ostrich-feather hemline.

■ Jessica Chastain in a corseted blue satin dress with crystals, pearls and crinoline by Louis Vuitton. Vuitton, designed by Marc Jacobs (who wore a black lace get-up), also outfitted Dakota Fanning in a lavender organza gown.

■ Cameron Diaz in a long-sleeve, crystal-fringe embroidered gown by Stella McCartney, who also dressed Kristin Wiig in an orange lace dress.

■ Welch in a cream-colored, organza tiered dress by Alexander McQueen's Sarah Burton, who also dressed Cate Blanchett in a black feather gown with ostrich hem.

■ Rihanna in a black leather gown with crocodile-style embossing by Tom Ford, who additionally wardrobed Timberlake and Brady.

■ Sofia Vergara in a silver-embroidered illusion column dress with a fan-style pleated tulle bodice by Marchesa, which also dressed Leighton Meester in a gold embroidered illusion dress.

■ Amy Adams in a cream one-shoulder silk chiffon gown with black velvet insert from Giambattista Valli Haute Couture.

■ Emily Blunt in salmon pink gown with cutouts by Francisco Costa for Calvin Klein, who also dressed Rosario Dawson. Klein's menswear creative director Italo Zucchelli wardrobed Victor Cruz and Amare Stoudemire.

■ Camilla Belle in a delicate ivory tulle beaded dress from Ralph Lauren, who also dressed Michelle Dockery of "Downton Abbey" and Tebow.

■ Renee Zellweger in a black illusion gown with an open back by Emilio Pucci.

■ Katharine McPhee in a coral-colored, square-neck embroidered gown.

■ Jessica Pare in a gold-and-bronze, second-skin sequined gown by L'Wren Scott, who came with boyfriend Mick Jagger.

■ Amber Heard in an orchid-colored bustier gown by Zac Posen.

■ Dianna Agron in a jade-green gown by Carolina Herrera with a peplum and snakeskin wrap belt.

■ Brooklyn Decker in a slate-blue pleated gown with floral appliques by Tory Burch.

■ Lea Michele in a blue gown with plunging neckline by Diane von Furstenberg.

■ Claire Danes in a white silk asymmetrical gown with embroidery by J. Mendel.

■ Ginnifer Goodwin in a Monique Lhuillier tangerine silk chiffon cap sleeve gown.

■ Kirsten Dunst in an orange-and-cream, double-breasted, jacket-style gown by Rodarte.

Wisconsin couple win $1M prize on 'Amazing Race'

MADISON, Wisconsin (AP)—A Wisconsin couple who appeared on the CBS reality-TV show "The Amazing Race" outlasted 10 other couples to claim top honors and a $1 million grand prize.

On their way to victory, Madison's Dave and Rachel Brown raced across five continents, nine countries and 22 cities. They won in December, but their win was only revealed during Sunday's season finale.

The show pits 11 two-person teams against each other in a trek around the world in which they must overcome a series of physical and mental obstacles.

Some of this season's challenges required strategic thinking and the ability to read terrain, which proved to be an advantage to Army veteran Dave Brown. The former Blackhawk helicopter pilot has a background in military intelligence and was also an officer in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

"This is definitely my element," he remarked when he and his wife boarded a helicopter.

The win was in doubt when the Browns, who are both in their 30s, arrived at the final destination only to be told they had missed an obstacle.

"We thought he was kidding," Dave Brown said. "We were under the impression that there was just one roadblock."

In a bit of good fortune for the two Wisconsin natives, the contest came down to a test of bowling skills, a popular Wisconsin pastime. Rachel Brown had to roll a stone down a dirt field into a makeshift goal. After just a few tries she nailed a strike.

Other challenges included scaling a 45-story building and rappelling back down, and paddling across a pond while standing on a surf board.

The couple agreed that after being kept apart by Dave's Army deployment and Rachel's frequent travel for her software company job, being able to spend time together was one of the best parts of competing.

"Just being with each other 24-7 was awesome," Dave said.

AP

Major Dave Brown, Jr., right, and his wife Rachel react to a welcome from friends as they arrive at the Dane County Regional Airport in Madison, Wis. on Monday, May 7, 2012. The two are winners of the CBS reality program "The Amazing Race." Dave Brown, Jr. is a major in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

'Avengers' ups dollar power with $207.4M opening

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"The Avengers" has extended its box-office superpowers with a record $207.4 million opening weekend domestically, an even bigger start than originally projected.

Final figures from distributor Disney on Monday put the film's debut $7.1 million higher than the studio had estimated a day earlier.

With a superstar cast, great reviews and glowing word of mouth from fans, "The Avengers" bounded past the previous record of $169.2 million set by last year's "Harry Potter" finale.

The Marvel Comics adaptation also has taken in $447.4 million overseas since it started rolling out in international markets a week earlier. That brings its worldwide total to $654.8 million in just 12 days.

The film drew in comic-book fans and general audiences alike, with the audience evenly split between those over and under 25, according to Disney. Teens packed theaters, couples came to see it as a date movie, and parents with children made it a family outing.

"Fans, non-fans, parents, non-parents. Any kind of descriptor you can come up with, people are embracing this film," said Dave Hollis, Disney's head of distribution.

Over the same first weekend of May 10 years earlier, "Spider-Man" rocked Hollywood with a $114.8 million debut, the first movie ever to open with more than $100 million in a single weekend.

"It was unthinkable. People thought, 'Wow, a blockbuster film should do $100 million in its whole run, not just opening weekend,'" said Paul Dergarabedian, analyst for box-office tracker Hollywood.com. "The $200 million opening weekend is something I didn't think I would ever see, or something I wouldn't see until after I retired."

But since summer 2002, other blockbusters have nudged opening-weekend records higher and higher: 2006's "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" with $135.6 million; 2007's "Spider-Man 3" with $151.1 million; 2008's "The Dark Knight" with $158.4 million; and finally, last summer's "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2."

"The Avengers" leaped beyond the "Potter" finale with a long, shrewd buildup by Marvel Studios, which had tucked teasers for its eventual superhero ensemble tale into solo films such as "Iron Man," ''Thor" and "Captain America" for years.

Directed by Joss Whedon, who has been reading "The Avengers" comics since he was a boy, the film features Robert Downey Jr. as Iron Man, Scarlett Johansson as Black Widow, Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury, Mark Ruffalo as the Hulk, Chris Hemsworth as Thor, Chris Evans as Captain America and Jeremy Renner as Hawkeye.

The sum of all of those superheroes proved more than the parts. "The Avengers" already has surpassed the worldwide box-office totals for "Iron Man," ''Iron Man 2," ''Thor" and "Captain America" in their entire runs.

Will Smith supports Obama's call for higher taxes

LOS ANGELES (AP)—One of Hollywood's biggest and best-paid stars is supporting President Barack Obama's call for higher taxes on the country's top earners.

Will Smith said while promoting "Men In Black III" last week that he supports the move.

"I'm very supportive of that idea," Smith told The Associated Press in an interview. "America has been fantastic to me. I have no problem paying whatever I need to pay to keep my country growing."

Smith

Obama has proposed that everyone earning $1 million a year or more should pay at least 30 percent of their income in taxes. One research group said the change would affect around 210,000 taxpayers.

Vanity Fair has reported that Smith was paid an estimated $20 million for "Men In Black III."

Stradivarius cello broken in accident in Spain

MADRID (AP)—A Stradivarius cello housed at the Spanish Royal Palace was broken in an accident, an official said Monday. The instrument could be worth more than $20 million.

A National Heritage official declined to specify what went wrong. She refused to comment on an El Mundo newspaper report that the instrument fell off a table during a photo session. She confirmed it happened about three weeks ago. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with department policy.

The damage sustained: a piece that joins the neck of the 17th-century instrument to the body of it broke and fell off the rest of the cello. That piece was not original but rather a replacement installed in the 19th century.

The official said the cello can and will be repaired.

The heritage official declined to say how much the cello was worth. She said it was part of a set of instruments—two violins and a viola were the others—that were known as "the Quartet." They got this name because they were commissioned at the same time.

However, Tim Ingles, head of the musical instrument department at Sotheby's auction house in London, said he believed the Spanish cello was worth $20 million (€15.4 million) or more.

'Lost' star Matthew Fox arrested for DUI in Oregon

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Actor Matthew Fox, star of the television series "Lost," has been charged with drunken driving in Oregon.

Fox

Police in Bend say the 45-year-old who lives in the Central Oregon city was stopped early Friday after an officer noticed a motorist failing to signal properly or stay within a lane of traffic.

During the stop, the officer decided Fox was driving under the influence and took him to the Deschutes County Jail.

Fox was released Friday after he was booked into custody. He has a court appearance scheduled for June 17.

The authorities would not release the police report or any additional information.

Fox's lawyer did not return a call seeking comment.

Attention, chocolate lovers: Prepare to start swooning

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I have heard that your dessert recipes are fabulous and I'd like to have them. I saw a column in which you mentioned your cookbooklets. I hope I'm correct about this, because I'd be interested in getting them. I have your booklet of poems and essays, which I have read and enjoyed many times.

Would you print your personal favorite dessert recipe and let me know how to get your cookbooklets? Warmest wishes to you, Abby, and thank you for all your columns.

ANITA B. IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR ANITA: You are welcome. It's hard for me to choose just one recipe because I have a notorious sweet tooth, and my cookbooklets contain more than a few that I have enjoyed many times. However, because you asked for my personal favorite, it would be one that not only I have enjoyed, but also one I have made for friends as gifts -- Regency Brownies With Chocolate Frosting. (Because the recipe yields 4 1/2 dozen, I confess I usually keep the "extra" six to munch on myself.)

BROWNIES

1 cup butter (2 sticks)
4 ounces bittersweet chocolate
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon vanilla

FROSTING

1 cup heavy cream
8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Line the bottom of an 18-by-12-by-2 (or 1)-inch baking pan with baking parchment paper and spray generously with butter-flavored cooking spray.

In the top of a double boiler, over medium heat, melt butter and 4 ounces chocolate. Reserve.

In a large bowl, beat sugar and eggs until fluffy. Add flour and salt, mixing well. Add chocolate mixture, blending thoroughly. Stir in nuts and vanilla.

Pour into prepared baking pan. (Batter should be about 1/2 inch thick, NOT MORE.) Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until top is crisp and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool before pouring frosting over the top.

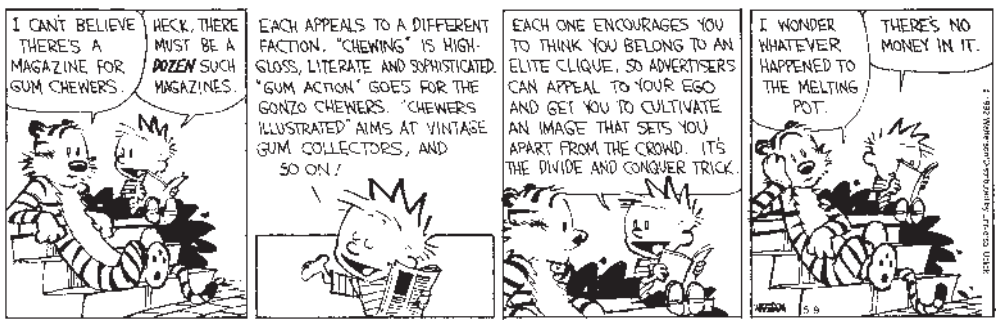
For the frosting: Bring cream to a boil, stirring constantly. Place chopped chocolate in a medium bowl; pour boiling cream over the chocolate and stir to blend well. Spread thin layer of warm frosting over top of brownies in pan. When cool, cut into 2-inch squares.

My cookbooklet set contains not only many easy-to-prepare crowd-pleasing recipes, but also tips on entertaining. It can be ordered by sending your name and address, plus check or money order for $14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price. If you're a serious chocolate lover, these brownies will make your toes curl, and that's a promise. With summer coming and families gathering for the holidays, now's the time to dust off your favorite picnic and barbecue recipes. My dessert recipes have started many a family tradition.

Pastimes

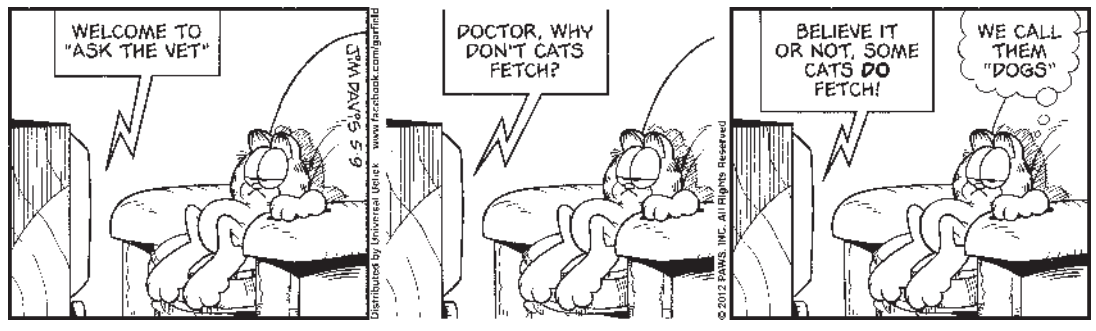
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE'S A MAGAZINE FOR GUM CHEWERS.
HECK, THERE MUST BE A DOZEN SUCH MAGAZINES.
EACH APPEALS TO A DIFFERENT FACTION. "CHEWING" IS HIGH-GLOSS, LITERATE AND SOPHISTICATED. "GUM ACTION" GOES FOR THE GONZO CHEWERS. "CHEWERS ILLUSTRATED" AIMS AT VINTAGE GUM COLLECTORS, AND SO ON.
EACH ONE ENCOURAGES YOU TO THINK YOU BELONG TO AN ELITE CLIQUE, SO ADVERTISERS CAN APPEAL TO YOUR EGO AND GET YOU TO CULTIVATE AN IMAGE THAT SETS YOU APART FROM THE CROWD. IT'S THE DIVIDE AND CONQUER TRICK.
I WONDER WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE MELTING POT.
THERE'S NO MONEY IN IT.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


WELCOME TO "ASK THE VET"
DOCTOR, WHY DON'T CATS FETCH?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, SOME CATS DO FETCH!
WE CALL THEM "DOGS"
Distributed by Universal Uclick www.facebook.com/garfield
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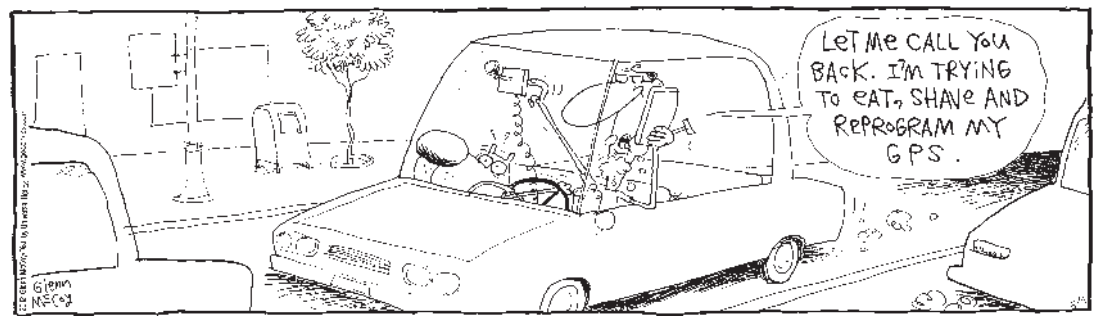
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

KATY AND I ARE FORMING A BAND. DO YOU WANT IN?
POSSIBLY. THOUGH I DO HAVE A LIST OF DEMANDS.
HMM. WHERE SHOULD I START? PUBLISHING RIGHTS OR BACKSTAGE FOOD AND DRINK?
WELL, WE'RE JUST WRITING ONE HIT SONG.
ONE HIT SONG? WHY STOP AT ONE?
WE'D NEED A FOLLOW-UP TO "TACO TUESDAY."
"WAFFLE WEDNESDAY!" BOOM! WHERE'S MY ROYALTY CHECK?

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

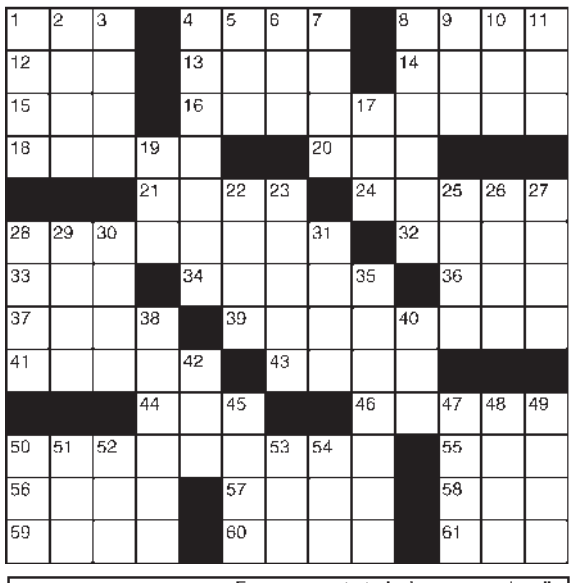
ACROSS
1 Recede
4 Melt
8 Fedora feature
12 — Zedong
13 Anger
14 Franc replacement
15 Work with
16 Irish Sea land
18 Bush
20 Twosome
21 Bantu language
24 Secret meeting
28 Winnipeg's province
32 Individually
33 Lennon's lady
34 Rod-shaped bacteria
36 Simple card game
37 Revue segment
39 Capital of Nepal
41 Pulsate
43 Reveille's opposite
44 In favor of
46 Emanate
50 Island sold in 1626
55 Conclude
56 Entreaty
57 Piquancy
58 Toss in
59 Heart of the matter
60 Theater award
61 Plaything

DOWN
1 Ostriches' kin
2 Wild party
3 Afrikaner
4 Homage
5 That guy's
6 Every last crumb
7 Unwanted plant
8 Preceding
9 Pirates' potation
10 George's brother
11 Calendar abbr.
17 Chic no longer
19 Submachine gun
22 Tress
23 WWII vessel
25 Show ennui
26 Large amount
27 Via, briefly
28 Lion's share
29 Egyptian cross
30 Bleak film style
31 Utah ski resort
35 Have an effect (on)
38 Tails accessory
40 Fool
42 Support of a sort
45 "Beetle Bailey" dog
47 Membership
48 Loosen
49 Vortex
50 Fuel economy meas.
51 "The Greatest"
52 Classic game-console letters
53 Bill
54 Singer DiFranco

Solution time: 21 mins.

B	L	O	C	■	S	E	M	I	■	F	C	C
O	A	H	U	■	E	X	E	S	■	A	L	A
G	O	O	D	F	A	I	I	H	■	I	O	N
■	■	■	G	U	S	T	■	M	A	T	T	E
O	G	H	E	R	■	■	E	A	G	H	■	■
N	A	I	L	■	I	O	G	E	I	H	E	H
U	R	L	■	T	O	N	A	L	■	I	R	C
S	E	L	F	H	O	O	D	■	S	L	I	P
■	■	B	R	U	T	■	■	M	A	I	F	S
I	D	I	O	M	■	B	E	A	U	■	■	■
B	E	L	■	B	I	L	L	Y	C	L	U	B
I	L	L	■	E	R	O	S	■	E	A	S	E
S	L	Y	■	D	A	T	E	■	S	C	A	D

Yesterday's answer 5-9



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Steve Yzerman, 47; John Corbett, 51; Billy Joel, 63; Candice Bergen, 66.

Happy Birthday: You can succeed, as long as you don't let impulse be your guide. Stick to the practical applications that have always kept you on the right track. There is plenty to gain through hard work and dedication. Welcome challenges, knowing you are prepared to go the distance to get what you want. Your numbers are 4, 11, 19, 22, 27, 33, 46.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't take action unless you are certain that you are responding appropriately. An impulsive move at this point may damage what you have been working toward. Take a deep breath and recalculate your next move. When in doubt, stop and observe. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Look for opportunities to learn. Take part in functions that can help you further your position. Getting together with people who share your interests will help you direct your energy efficiently. Do something nice for someone you love. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Get down to business. Take care of personal affairs. Don't leave anything to chance. Luck is with you if you do your due diligence and focus on getting ahead. Financial gains are likely if you are disciplined and negotiate strategically. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Spread a little cheer and engage in friendly banter. Discuss your plans openly and be playful with your friends, family and lover. Your attitude will make the difference in the outcome of whatever you pursue. A partnership will bring you good fortune. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): A disciplined approach to both professional and personal money matters will put you in a good position. Extravagance of any kind must be avoided. Don't allow your emotions to lead to an impulsive promise that will be difficult to fulfill. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Show how energetic you can be. Take the initiative and add your personal touch to whatever you do. Your ability to convince others to help you will put you well ahead of schedule. Communicating and networking will enhance your reputation. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You'll have excellent vision when it comes to stretching your money so you can purchase everything you need for the right price. Greater security will result if you discuss your plans for the future with someone you love. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): As long as you weigh the pros and cons before you proceed, you will not have to backtrack. Impulse will be your downfall. Focus on how you can tactfully make the alterations you want without raising suspicion. Use creative logic. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Complete whatever is asked of you as quickly as possible. You will want to leave enough time to do something enjoyable late in the day with a friend or lover. A change at home should turn out in your favor. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Let your emotions show and you will be able to get others to do as you please. Making changes to your home will bring about an opportunity to meet someone who will benefit you in the future. An investment will pay off. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Slow down, rethink your steps and be careful how much you take on. Love will be enhanced if you are open about your feelings and your long-term intentions. What you do for others will be repaid tenfold. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Concentrate on your professional goals. Make calls and present what you can offer to someone who may be able to utilize your services. Don't let an emotional issue with a family member hold you back. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are practical, relentless and driven to be the best. You are unstoppable.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5	6					
	2		5					
4				3				7
3	7	2			8	5	6	
		6						3
		4						1
		8	1	5	9	3	7	6
		9		4		8		5
		3		8		1		4

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/09

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

7	8	3	4	6	1	5	9	2
2	6	5	3	9	8	4	7	1
4	1	9	7	5	2	8	6	3
3	7	4	8	1	5	6	2	9
8	2	6	9	3	7	1	4	5
5	9	1	6	2	4	7	3	8
9	3	8	1	7	6	2	5	4
1	5	7	2	4	9	3	8	6
6	4	2	5	8	3	9	1	7

Difficulty level ★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THOMAS KINKADE (1958-2012) Solution: 8 letters

S	T	S	C	A	R	D	S	E	P	M	U	G	S	H
E	H	T	W	O	H	S	C	T	V	A	R	A	T	S
S	O	O	O	F	G	A	Ⓦ	H	R	E	S	A	R	U
U	M	R	P	W	E	I	Ⓞ	O	U	E	R	T	E	R
O	A	M	F	P	N	I	Ⓛ	M	T	R	A	E	E	B
H	S	Y	I	T	I	S	Ⓖ	E	N	E	C	M	T	L
T	T	E	E	B	U	N	C	S	I	D	O	H	S	T
H	L	R	L	R	S	E	G	A	A	R	L	S	E	H
G	Y	U	D	I	T	D	D	C	P	O	O	E	A	S
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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DONALD W. BURCHER, Jr., Petitioner,	]	**FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 11-0443**
vs.	]	
DOROTHY JOY M. BURCHER, Respondent.	]	

ORDER FOR RESPONDENT DOROTHY JOY M. BURCHER TO APPEAR OR PLEAD

TO: DOROTHY JOY M. BURCHER

Pursuant to 7 CMC § 1301,YOU are hereby ORDERED to make a personal appearance before the Court or else to file any written response you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within twenty (20) days after publication of this Order in one of the two major daily newspapers in the Commonwealth. You are further directed to deliver or mail a copy of any responsive pleading that you file to Petitioner's attorney, Thomas E. Clifford, whose address is:

2nd Floor, Alexander Building,
San Jose
P.O. Box 506514
Saipan, MP 96950

as soon as practicable after filing. Any responsive pleading should be filed with Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. If you fail either to make a personal appearance or to file a written response in accordance with this Order, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief requested in the Complaint.

So ORDERED this 23rd day of January, 2012.

/s/ The Honorable PERRY B. INOS
Associate Judge

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Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms,
Chalan Kiya
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST, Plaintiff,	]	**Civil Action No. 06-0324**
vs.	]	
FRANCISCO A. AGUON and ROSALIA M. AGUON, Defendants.	]	

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR MOTION TO CONFIRM SALE OF MORTGAGED PROPERTY

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the attached Motion to Confirm Sale of Mortgaged Property by Plaintiff has been filed with the Court and said Motion is set for a hearing on this 31st day of May, 2012, at 1:30 pm before Judge JN Camacho in the Superior Court, Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dated this 27th day of March, 2012.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
DEPUTY CLERK 1
Office of the Clerk of Court
Superior Court, CNMI Judicial Branch
TINIAN and SAIPAN

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Superior Court is seeking **Deputy Clerk 1, Office of the Clerk of Court on the islands of TINIAN and SAIPAN.**

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: This position is under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge and the direct supervision of the Clerk of Court or his/her designee. The employee performs work in accordance with established policies, practices, and court procedures. The following are required duties: receives, reviews, and records documents filed for hearings; provides data entry of pleadings onto the court's case management system; provides daily updates of pleadings and other caseload information for assigned judge through the court's automated processes, including but not limited to the document imaging and online filing system; inspects physical and electronic documents submitted to court, including looking for accuracy, proper form, and conformance with court order or court rules; assesses fines, receives and accounts for monies, issues receipts, prepares deposit slips and provides disbursements per court order or requests from customer service window; prepares and maintains physical and electronic file folders for court cases, including tracking of all pleadings associated with individual cases files; serves as a courtroom clerk when court hearings are in session, including but not limited to swearing in of witnesses, logging of all admitted exhibits, tracking all phases of a hearing on an index sheet for the recording counter, operating the electronic recording equipment, and providing continuous monitoring of the recording equipment to ensure the integrity of the record; and, performs other related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS: A high school degree or equivalent plus a minimum of three (3) years related work experience. There is a strong preference for those with work experience in the legal field. Candidates must possess a valid CNMI driver's license, current police and traffic clearances and be able to demonstrate eligibility to work in the CNMI.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: These are ungraded positions appointed and serve at the pleasure of the Presiding Judge. Starting salary will be $20,485 per annum, commensurate with experience.

Application forms may be obtained at the OPM offices in the CNMI, at the Supreme Court office at the Guma Hustisia/Ilimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Tinian and Rota. Completed applications, resumes, proof of high school graduation, along with copies of police clearance and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI may be submitted at: the Supreme Court office at the House of Justice in Susupe, Saipan, the Superior Court offices on Rota and Tinian or addressed to Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja, P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP, 96950. This job announcement will remain open until filled. For additional information about the position call (670) 236-9716. This job announcement can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.justice.gov.mp.

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WORLD RESORT

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPEN DATE:	May 04, 2012	POSITION:	Education & Training (level to be decided after interview)
CLOSE DATE:	May 12, 2012	SALARY:	Depend on qualifications

Qualifications:
College graduate. Human Resources/personnel management experience strongly preferred.

OPEN DATE:	May 04, 2012	POSITION:	Guest Relation Officer
CLOSE DATE:	May 12, 2012	SALARY:	Minimum Wage

Qualifications:
High school graduate or equivalent. Proficiency in Russian language. Must have excellent people skills, willingness to provide service, friendly attitude and ready smile.

OPEN DATE:	May 04, 2012	POSITION:	Cook (Korean Cuisine)
CLOSE DATE:	May 12, 2012	SALARY:	Minimum Wage

Qualifications:
High school graduate or equivalent. Minimum two (2) years in culinary experience preferred. Applicants with formal training/education in culinary arts strongly preferred.

OPEN DATE:	May 04, 2012	POSITION:	Server
CLOSE DATE:	May 12, 2012	SALARY:	Minimum Wage

Qualifications:
High school graduate or equivalent. Experience in food service required. Friendly personality, willingness to serve and a readily smiling individual highly preferred.

OPEN DATE:	May 04, 2012	POSITION:	Maintenance Repair
CLOSE DATE:	May 12, 2012	SALARY:	Minimum Wage

Qualifications:
High school graduate or equivalent. Minimum two (2) years experience preferred. Formal education/training in construction related field highly preferred.

OPEN DATE:	May 04, 2012	POSITION:	Lifeguard
CLOSE DATE:	May 11, 2012	SALARY:	Minimum Wage

Qualifications:
High school graduate or equivalent. Obtaining a lifeguard certification is preferred. Must have a friendly and outgoing personality.

For more information, please contact Ms. Miriam K. Seman, Human Resources Team Manager at (670) 234-5900 ext. 274/266/576.

Employment application forms are available at the Saipan World Resort, Security Office, located next to the Wave Jungle Water Park. Applicants must submit the completed form and all the necessary requirements to the Security Office. Incomplete application will not be accepted by the Security Office.

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ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$27
• 5-Liner	$24	$39
• 3-Liner with picture	$24	$42
• 5-Liner with picture	$36	$57

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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CP3 leads Clips past Grizz in OT to 3-1 lead

LOS ANGELES (AP)— The Los Angeles Clippers' 10-point lead late in regulation had evaporated, and Blake Griffin stood helplessly at their bench with hands on hips after fouling out in overtime. A building full of red-shirted fans sat nervously, dreading another disaster for a franchise with more than its share.

Except Chris Paul wasn't around for any of the Clippers' bad times.

While everybody else worried, he calmly shepherded his club out of another perilous spot and onto the brink of something big.

Paul scored eight of his 27 points in a dynamic overtime performance, and the Clippers moved to the verge of their second playoff series victory in 36 years with a 101-97 win over the Memphis Grizzlies on Monday night, taking a 3-1 series lead.

"It's fun, it's exciting," said Paul, who atoned for his inability to score at the regulation buzzer.

"The worst mistake I probably made in the game was not getting the shot at the end of regulation," he added. "If I was at home watching it on TV, I'd be talking so bad about me. But you've got to get through it. The (best) thing about it is that I have teammates that have confidence in me. Everything that we do is a team win."

Maybe so, but the Clippers were ever so grateful to rely on their All-Star point guard.

Griffin had 30 points and seven assists before fouling out with 2:26 left in overtime for the Clippers, who blew an 84-74 lead over the final 4 1/2 minutes of regulation before Paul took charge in the overtime. He played with the same intensity he showed late in regulation, heedlessly flinging himself over the front row of chairs in an attempt to save a loose ball.

"He's a great player, and that's what great players do," Memphis coach Lionel Hollins said.

Game 5 is Wednesday night in Memphis, with Game 6 back at Staples Center on Friday if necessary.

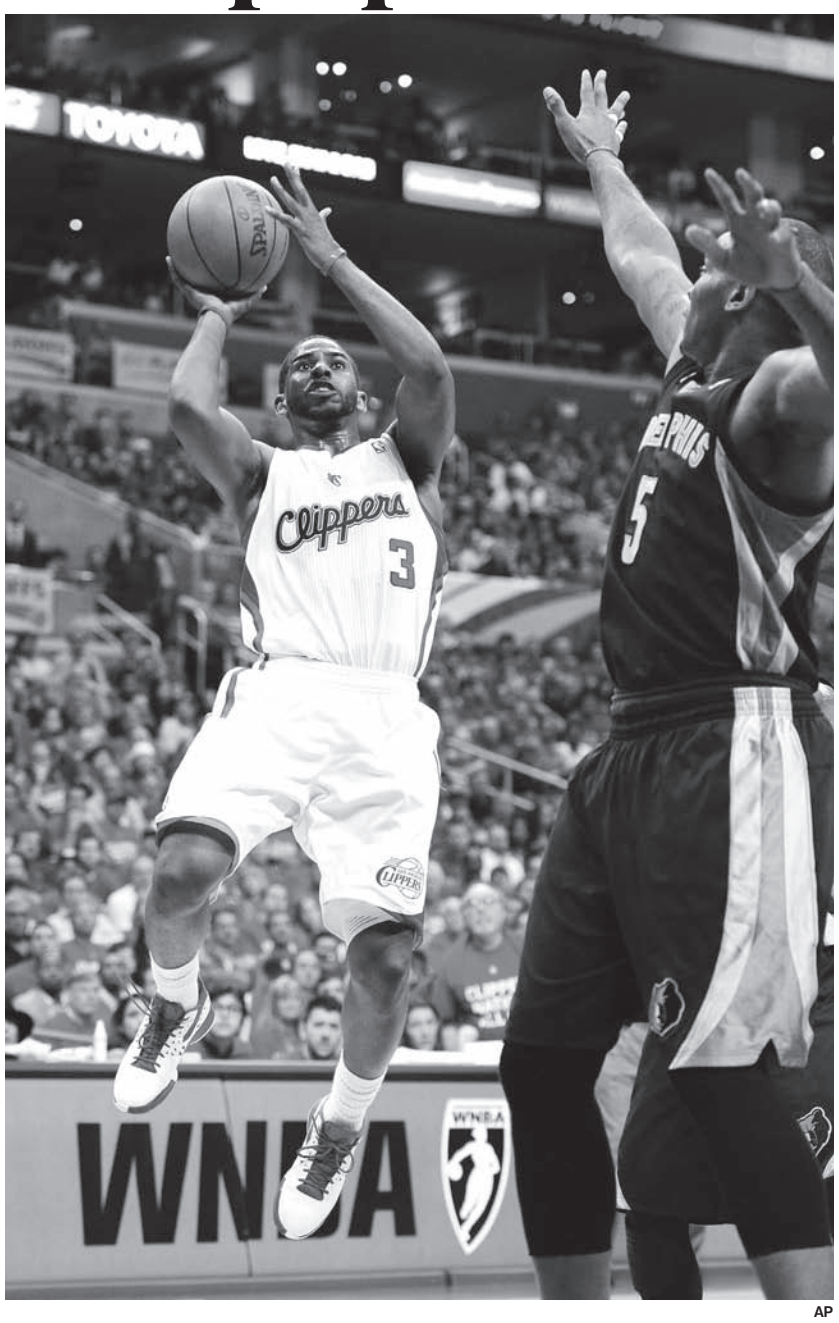
After Paul hit consecutive jumpers to put the Clippers ahead 99-93 with 44 seconds left, Mike Conley's layup with 8.1 seconds left trimmed the Clippers' lead back to two points. But after Mo Williams hit two free throws with 7.2 seconds left and Rudy Gay missed a meaningless 3-pointer, Griffin and Paul embraced while another frenzied sellout crowd of long-suffering Clippers fans roared.

"Chris is always intense," Clippers coach Vinny Del Negro said. "That's what makes him special. Chris is so good, not only at making plays for himself, but making the right play. That's what makes him a star."

Conley scored a career playoff-high 25 points and Gay had 23 on 8-of-25 shooting for the Grizzlies, who couldn't match Paul's late-game poise in another thrilling chapter of a highly entertaining series with four games decided by a total of 15 points.

"It's good TV, man, get the ratings up," Paul said. "We don't want any blowouts. There's a reason we finished 4-5 (in the Western Conference standings) with one game between us. We have a lot of competitive guys that don't give up in this series. We have two teams that are going to fight until the end."

In their breakthrough season since pairing Paul with Griffin, the Clippers need one more victory to win their second playoff series since the erstwhile Buffalo Braves moved to California. Los Angeles beat Denver in the first round in 2006, but hadn't been back to the postseason until this spring.



AP

Los Angeles Clippers guard Chris Paul (3) shoots as Memphis Grizzlies center Marreese Speights defends during the first half of Game 3 in their first-round NBA basketball playoff series, Saturday, May 5, 2012, in Los Angeles.

Caron Butler, playing with a broken bone in his left hand, scored 14 points for the Clippers, who still can't be comfortable after getting outrebounded 47-36 and giving away a big late lead.

After the Clippers rallied from big fourth-quarter deficits in their first two victories, Memphis rallied to 85-83 on Zach Randolph's jumper with 1:25 left. Gay hit the tying jumper in the final minute of regulation, and Paul drove for the go-ahead layup—his only points of the fourth quarter—before Randolph coolly hit two tying free throws with 20.4 seconds left.

Paul couldn't get a shot on the final possession of regulation, with Tony Allen and Gay swarming him—but he didn't quit.

"It's Chris Paul. He made his name off doing that," Gay said. "He's a tough guard. We can try and make it tougher on him, but still he's going to make plays and make his teammates better. That's what he's been doing."

The Clippers led 95-89 when Griffin fouled out, and the Grizzlies trimmed it to two points on jumpers by Conley and Gay. Paul went to work, shaking loose from defenders and hitting back-to-back jumpers sandwiching a turnover by Conley.

"Defensively in the overtime, we got three stops in a row, and Chris came down and hit big shot after big shot," Griffin said. "We keep telling ourselves, and we've said this all year, it starts on defense for us."

Fans filled Staples Center well before tipoff, donning their giveaway red T-shirts and standing to cheer on the majority of Los Angeles' possessions. They raised Staples Center's intensity to a level it hadn't seen since ... well, Sunday, when the Los Angeles Kings' fans roared throughout their second-round NHL clincher over St. Louis.

The tone was set in the first quarter: In a scintillating 2 1/2-minute stretch, the teams combined for six 3-pointers, an alley-oop from Paul to DeAndre Jordan and a technical foul for Gay. Butler, who broke his hand in the opener and sat out Game 2 before surprisingly returning for Game 3, scored 11 points and checked out to a standing ovation in the first quarter.

Memphis kept constant pressure on Griffin, forcing the two-time All-Star to be resourceful while keeping his temper in check. Randolph got a technical foul in the second quarter when he fouled Griffin roughly on the shoulder and then chest-bumped him, but Griffin only chuckled while Randolph, the former Clippers big man, was pulled away from him.

The Grizzlies got tough, but the NBA's leaders in steals didn't get a single steal in the first half.

Spurs 81, Jazz 81

In Salt Lake City, the San Antonio Spurs completed a 4-0 sweep of Utah in their NBA first-round series.

Manu Ginobili broke out of his shooting slump with 17 points. He went 0 for 8 from beyond the arc in the first three games but after Utah pulled within 61-58 with 3:18 left in the third, he hit consecutive 3-pointers then added another as the Spurs regained control, taking a 76-58 lead early in the fourth.

The Jazz went scoreless for more than 8 minutes during a 15-0 Spurs run. Utah made a furious charge late and was within 83-79 with 49 seconds left. But Ginobili's fastbreak layup after a steal by Tony Parker sealed it.

Utah's Big 3 lineup with Derrick Favors at power forward kept the Jazz close, but San Antonio's bench made the difference, outscoring the Jazz's reserves 47-10.

Top-seeded San Antonio advanced to the second round and awaits the winner of the Memphis-Los Angeles Clippers series, which may not be settled until Sunday.

The Spurs are on a 14-game winning streak and looking to make amends for a first-round upset by Memphis last year.

The Jazz have lost eight straight playoff games as they were swept by the Lakers in the second round two years ago. It was only the second first-round sweep in Utah history, the other coming in 1989.

The young, inexperienced Jazz put up a fight at the end, but it was too little too late.

The Spurs won Game 1 by 15 points, Game 2 by 31 and Game 3 by 12, relying on MVP candidate Parker and the deepest bench in the league.

With Parker scoring 11 points on 4-of-14 shooting Monday, and starters Kawhi Leonard and Danny Green struggling offensively, San Antonio's bench picked up the slack.

Tim Duncan added 11 points and was the only other starter in double figures for the Spurs.

Al Jefferson led Utah with 26 points on 13-of-19 shooting, and had 10 rebounds. Devin Harris added 19 points but shot just 6 of 17. Favors, making his first postseason start, added 16 points and blocked shots by Parker and Splitter.

Vilma, others fight suspensions in bounty case

NEW ORLEANS (AP)— Saints linebacker Jonathan Vilma and three other players suspended in the NFL's investigation of New Orleans' cash-for-hits bounty system challenged their punishments Monday.

Vilma, named by the NFL as a ringleader of the operation, appealed his season-long suspension while the NFL Players Association notified the league it was reserving the appeal rights of Saints defensive end Will Smith and those of ex-Saints Anthony Hargrove and Scott Fujita.

All four players and the union argue that no appeal should be heard before NFLPA grievances are resolved questioning NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell's authority to discipline the players and to hear their appeals.

Vilma's appeal also states the NFL has not presented any evidence linking him to a system in which players were paid to injure opponents. It asks the league to provide a wide range of documentation, including witness statements and the names of those witnesses.

Vilma received the harshest of the suspensions, followed by Hargrove (eight games) Smith (four games) and Fujita (three games). Monday was their deadline to appeal.

Hargrove now is with Green Bay. Fujita, a member of the NFLPA's executive committee who has played for Cleveland since 2010, made his first public statement since all four suspensions were handed down last Wednesday. Like Vilma and Smith before him, Fujita denied involvement in a "bounty pool" and challenged the league's findings.

"I disagree wholeheartedly with the discipline imposed," Fujita said in a statement emailed to The Associated Press. "I've yet to hear the specifics of any allegation against me, nor have I seen any evidence that supports what the NFL alleges.

"I look forward to the opportunity to confront what evidence they claim to have in the appropriate forum," Fujita continued. "I have never contributed money to any so-called `bounty' pool, and any statements to the contrary are false. To say I'm disappointed with the League would be a huge understatement."

The players' maneuvers came on the same day copies of a sworn statement by Hargrove were obtained by media including the AP.

Hargrove's statement describes how he was instructed by ex-defensive coordinator Gregg Williams and current New Orleans assistant head coach Joe Vitt to deny the existence of a bounty program to NFL investigators.

The interpretation of his statement is a matter of debate, however.

The NFL has said that Hargrove's words acknowledge the existence of a bounty program and show that Hargrove initially lied to NFL investigators about it. The union notes that Hargrove's statement does not say that he lied to anyone, nor does it state that he or any other Saints participated in a bounty program.

The argument is one of many that are bound to play out on appeal, once the union's jurisdictional challenges have been resolved.

The union's grievances argue that Goodell is prohibited from punishing players for any aspect of the case occurring before the current collective bargaining agreement was signed last August. It argues that a CBA system arbitrator, and not Goodell, has the authority to decide player punishment under such circumstances, as well as rule on any appeals.

Vilma's latest filing not only reiterates those positions but also states that the NFL still has not provided "a single piece of evidence" to the Saints defensive captain to justify his suspension.

"To be able to share, discuss and analyze the supposed evidence that has been gathered is a fundamental cornerstone of a fair and just process, and a vital prerequisite to uncovering the truth," wrote Vilma's attorney, Peter Ginsburg. "Indeed, the failure of the NFL to conduct itself in a just manner has compromised the process and resulted in erroneous and damaging conclusions."

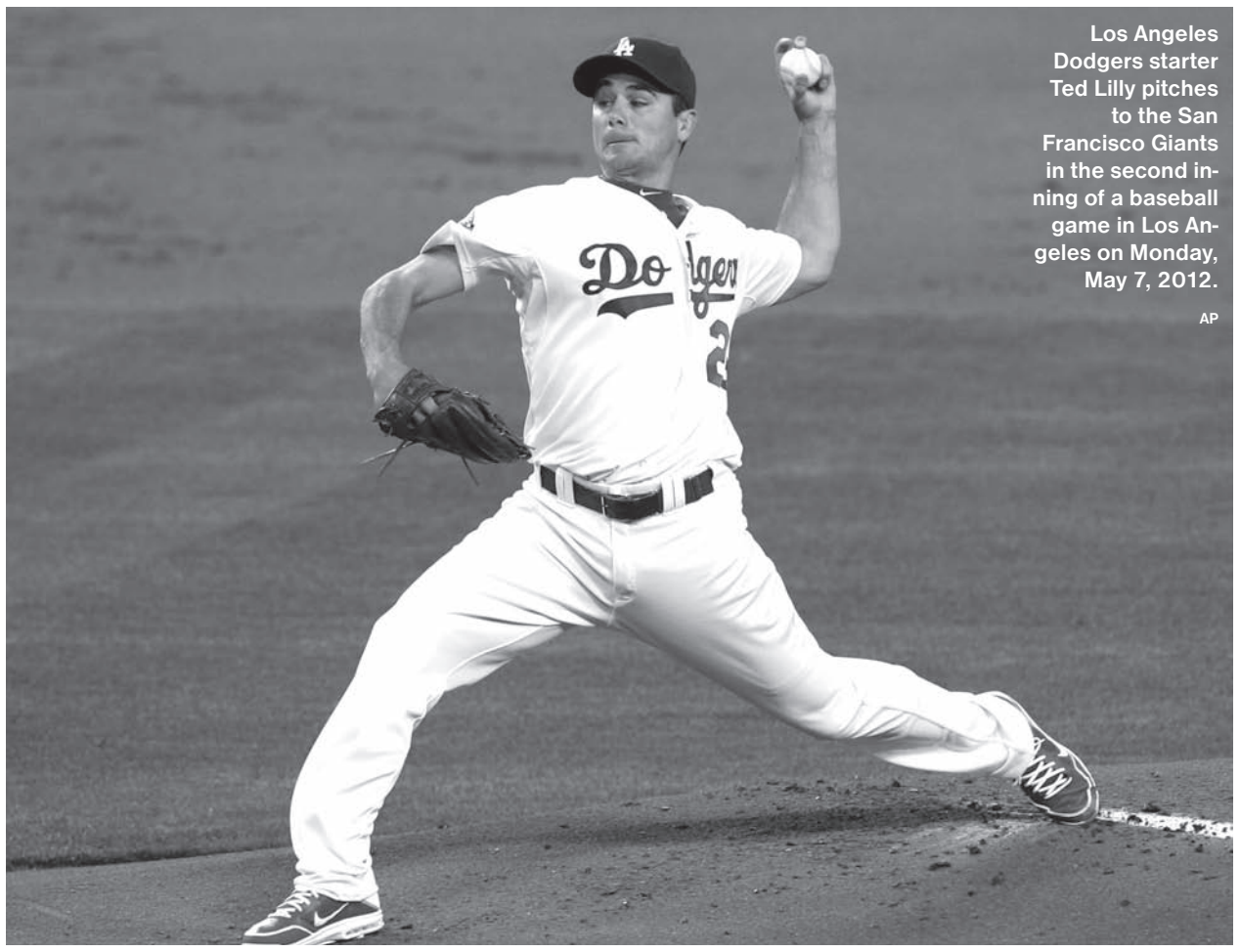
Lilly steers Dodgers to win over Giants

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Los Angeles Ted Lilly outpitched Barry Zito through six innings as the Dodgers marked their first home game since changing ownership by beating the San Francisco Giants 9-1 on Monday.

Lilly (4-0) allowed one run, walked two and struck out six.

The Dodgers tacked on five runs in the eighth against an injury-depleted Giants bullpen that was further hurt on Monday by the announcement of Guillermo Mota's 100-game suspension for a second violation of baseball's drug policy. The inning included a two-run single by Andre Ethier, who leads the National League with 30 RBIs.

Zito (1-1) gave up eight hits in six innings.



Los Angeles Dodgers starter Ted Lilly pitches to the San Francisco Giants in the second inning of a baseball game in Los Angeles on Monday, May 7, 2012.

AP

Cardinals 9, Diamondbacks 6

In Phoenix, Lance Lynn pitched five scoreless innings to become the majors' first six-game winner at 6-0 and lead St. Louis to a victory over Arizona.

Rafael Furcal hit the 30th leadoff home run of his career for St. Louis, the first of five homers for the Cardinals. Carlos Beltran and Matt Holliday hit consecutive homers to open the third off Joe Saunders (2-2). Allen Craig and David Freese homered to start the seventh after Arizona had scored six times in the sixth to cut the lead to 7-6.

Saunders allowed seven runs in just 3 1-3 innings.

Cubs 5, Braves 1

In Chicago, Jeff Samardzija allowed just one run over seven strong innings as Chicago defeated Atlanta.

Samardzija (4-1) struck out seven in a 105-pitch outing.

The Cubs hit three solo homers: Bryan LaHair drove Tommy Hanson's first pitch of the bottom of the fourth over the right field wall; one pitch later, Ian Stewart went long to make it 2-1, and Geovany Soto hit a two-run homer in the eighth.

Hanson (3-3) gave up five hits in six innings.

Mets 5, Phillies 2

In Philadelphia, Jordany Valdespin hit a three-run homer in the ninth for his first major league hit, leading New York over Philadelphia.

Valdespin, called into the game to replace injured shortstop Ruben Tejada, was 0 for 6 before hitting a drive to right off Jonathan Papelbon (0-1), giving the injury-plagued Mets their third straight win.

Tim Byrdak (1-0) retired the only batter he faced to get the win.

Marlins 4, Astros 0

In Houston, Carlos Zambrano pitched a shutout for his first win of the season, leading Miami over Houston and to its seventh straight victory.

Zambrano (1-2), whose only no-hitter also came against the Astros, struck out a season-best nine and never allowed a batter past first base. It was his first complete game and first shutout since 2009.

Giancarlo Stanton extended his hitting streak to 10 games with a two-run homer that opened the scoring. He has six homers and 12 RBIs during his streak.

Houston's Wandy Rodriguez (3-3) gave up a season-worst four earned runs in eight-plus innings.

Reds 6, Brewers 1

In Milwaukee, Bronson Arroyo pitched solidly into the seventh inning to lead Cincinnati over Milwaukee.

Arroyo (2-1) gave up a homer in the first but settled after that, striking out nine in 6 2-3 innings.

Jay Bruce hit a three-run home run to cap a five-run fourth inning off Marco Estrada (0-2). Bruce extended his hitting streak to 10 games and is batting .405 (15 for 37) with six home runs and 12 RBIs during the run.

Estrada gave up five runs in seven innings of work.

Padres 3, Rockies 2

In San Diego, Edinson Volquez notched his win with San Diego as the hosts downed Colorado.

Volquez (1-2), obtained in an offseason trade with Cincinnati, allowed two runs in 5 1-3 innings, and struck out five.

Yonder Alonso drove in two run for the Padres.

The Rockies lost their fourth straight game and their shaky rotation took another hit as Drew Pomeranz (0-2) left with a bruised quadriceps in the fourth inning. He allowed three runs in three innings, including one on a wild pitch.

Rangers' 14, Orioles 3

In Baltimore, Texas first baseman Brandon Snyder homered and had a career-high six RBIs against his former team as the Rangers beat Baltimore 1 to end the Orioles' five-game winning streak.

Snyder, the Orioles' top draft choice in 2005, hit a two-run single in the second inning, a three-run drive in the sixth and an RBI single during a seven-run ninth.

Texas starter Matt Harrison (4-2) gave up six hits but only one walk in seven innings.

Orioles starter Brian Matusz (1-4) yielded seven runs in five-plus innings, leaving Baltimore in a 7-0 hole in the sixth.

Indians 8, White Sox 6, 1st gAME

Indians 3, White Sox 2, 2nd gAME

In Cleveland, Michael Brantley and Casey Kotchman drove in three runs each in the opening game as American League Central-leading Cleveland took both game of a double-header against Chicago.

Cleveland's Zach McAllister, called up from the minor-league Columbus Clippers for his fifth big-league start, pitched six innings for his first major league win. He allowed just two earned runs.

The Indians pounded Philip Humber (1-2) , who hasn't been sharp since pitching the 21st perfect game in major league history on April 21. Since then, he has allowed 20 runs in 13 1-3 innings and gone 0-2 with a no-decision.

In the night game, Shelley Duncan's RBI double in the eighth inning gave the Indians victory in steady rain.

Duncan ripped a pitch from left-hander Matt Thornton (1-2) into the left-field corner, scoring Asdrubal Cabrera.

Indians reliever Joe Smith (2-1) gave up a game-tying single after a lengthy rain delay, but got two outs and was credited with the win after Duncan's single.

Mariners 3, Tigers 2

In Seattle, John Jaso's sacrifice fly capped a three-run rally in the bottom of the ninth inning to give Seattle a win over Detroit.

Detroit led 2-0 entering the bottom of the ninth but Tigers acting closer Octavio Dotel walked one batter then another advanced on a wild pitch. Another wild pitch brought in a run to make it 2-1.

Jesus Montero then doubled to deep center to drive in another run and tie the game.

Duane Below relieved Dotel (1-1) but Kyle Seager sacrificed the pinch-runner to third base prior to Jaso driving him in.

Seattle's Steve Delabar (1-0) picked up the win with a scoreless ninth.

Red Sox 11, Royals 5

In Kansas City, Will Middlebrooks homered twice, while David Ortiz and Dustin Pedroia also each went deep as Boston pounded Kansas City to snap a five-game losing skid.

Middlebrooks, called up from the minors last week when Kevin Youkilis went on the disabled list, hit a three-run shot in the first inning and a two-run homer in the eighth, becoming the first player in Red Sox history with at least one extra-base hit in each of his first four major league games.

Boston starter Felix Doubront (2-1) allowed all five Kansas City runs over 6 1-3 innings but took the win.

Royals starter Jonathan Sanchez (1-2) was pounded for six runs in three-plus innings, the 11th straight time he failed to last more than five innings.

Angels 8, Twins 3

In Minneapolis, Jered Weaver allowed one run over six innings to guide Los Angeles past Minnesota.

Weaver (5-0) performed strongly in his first start since a no-hitter against the Twins last week.

Alberto Callaspo had a homer and three RBIs for the Angels.

Minnesota's Francisco Liriano (0-5) gave up four runs in five innings.

Clemens trial slows to crawl despite judge's pleas

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Roger Clemens perjury trial, which picked up a couple of miles per hour on its fastball last week with Andy Pettitte's testimony, has dropped back to a slow-pitch pace this week.

Prosecutors, who had said they might have star witness Brian McNamee testify Tuesday, now say there's no chance of that, and he might not even appear this week. And that was after U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton told both sides to speed things along.

"I do have concerns about the pace of this trial," Walton said Monday morning at the beginning of the trial's fourth week. Walton complained that there were a lot of unnecessary questions last week and warned, "if that continues, I will impose time limits."

Clemens, a seven-time winner of baseball's Cy Young Award, is accused of lying to Congress when he denied using steroids and human growth hormone.

Monday's session was dominated by painstaking discussions about needles, syringes, gauze and cotton balls, how they had been stored and who had control of them. McNamee, Clemens' former strength coach, has said he saved those items from when he injected Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone.

The two government witnesses Monday were federal agents Jeff Novitzky of the Food and Drug Administration and John Longmire of the FBI. Novitzky began investigating connections between drugs and sports as an agent with the Internal Revenue Service.

Novitzky encouraged McNamee to cooperate with former Sen. George Mitchell, who was investigating performance-enhancing drugs in baseball, and Mitchell eventually identified Clemens as a user in his report to Major League Baseball.

"We thought it was a good idea for Brian McNamee to cooperate with Mitchell," Novitzky said, because government officials were concerned that kids were emulating pro players who were using steroids and HGH.

Clemens' lawyers focused on the condition of the evidence when it was handed over to authorities by McNamee, emphasizing a photo of the items bunched in a bag with a beer can rather than the photos of the items neatly arranged for classification once they were in the hands of the IRS and later the FBI.

Clemens' lawyer Michael Attanasio asked FBI agent Longmire about keeping evidence in a beer can.

"I would not," Longmire said.

Why not?

"That's not what they trained us to do," the FBI agent responded.

The government is expected to show that Clemens' DNA was found among the items. Clemens' lawyers claim the evidence was tainted or contaminated.

Meanwhile, defense lawyers tried to capitalize on Pettitte's wavering testimony for the government. Last week, Pettitte had testified that Clemens told him he had tried HGH, only to say under cross-examination that he might have misunderstood Clemens. As expected, Clemens' lawyers filed a motion asking that the jury not be allowed to consider the conversation between the two pitchers.

Pettitte said it was "fair" to say that there was a 50 percent chance he misunderstood Clemens, his friend and one-time mentor.

"The court should not allow the jury to consider an alleged `admission' that has all the weight of a coin flip," Clemens' lawyers wrote in the filing. The government is expected to respond with a filing of its own before the judge rules.

Patz still in the lead in Tag Team 8-Ball

Patz's Pat Taitano and Pat Cepeda came back in the doubles matches Sunday to tie YNOT's Rick Rengiil and Norman Tenorio, 4-4, and maintain a narrow lead in the 19th Hole Bar Islander Tag Team 8-Ball Tournament.

Patz leads the field with 30 points, while Taylor Watanabe and John Mongami's Elaus took a 6-0 forfeit from Oneshot and surged to 28 points. Oneshot's Ed Suzuki and Ron Chisato follow with 20.

IDC's Quinton Ngirarois and Welson Apaisang passed Tasi's Annie Tesiro and Ken Phillips in the standings with a 5-2 win Saturday. IDC has 19, YNOT 18, and Tasi 17 points.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

With 30 points, Patz's Pat Taitano and Pat Cepeda currently lead the 19th Hole Bar Islander Tag Team 8-ball Tournament.

Watever's Walt Sutherland and Rose Phillips won 5-3 over Shotlokker's Rodney Aldan and William Hart and ran their total to 13. Shotlokker has 11 points.

Watever and Shotlokker both have a make-up game coming against YNOT and could move up in the standings. YNOT is still the wildcard; they could be tied for first or at the bottom of the standings after the make-up games.

The league finishes this weekend, with the Sunday match between Patz and Tasi rescheduled to this Thursday. Elaus takes on YNOT and Oneshot faces off against Watever Saturday. Shotlokker meets IDC Sunday.

The teams play each other once with three best-of-three games series, every Saturday and Sunday, starting at 7:30pm. Each team member plays a singles match followed by a double pairing, with each win scored as one point. Cash prizes go to the Top 3 finishers, plus trophies for first to fifth place winner.

The 19th Hole is located in Lower Navy Hill. Coming from Garapan, it's just before the Bank of Hawaii traffic light.

In addition to billiards, they offer darts and free wifi Internet. The 19th Hole is open from 4pm to 2am daily and features the Rock Island Band from 9pm Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

For more information, contact Rose or Ken Phillips at 788-5929. ***(PR)***

FALCONS

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Notably, the Falcons, Jets, and Enforcers are very much alive in the playoff race, while with a little luck the Fielders may still have an outside chance to sneak in.

JUNIOR DIVISION
Red Sox 13, Fielders 3

The Red Sox capitalized off three early runs from errors with a pair of RBI singles by Nathan Camacho and M.J. Sakisat in the first inning. Sakisat later stole home to give the Red Sox a 5-0 cushion.

The Fielders managed to get a run back from Kainao Wanket in the bottom frame, but the Red Sox padded their lead with four more runs in the third inning.

Two runs came around on some extra throws around the infield before Sakisat reached on an error and stole home and Jonathan Sagan brought in Jobe Reyes with a triple.

The Fielders' Wanket doubled home George Pangelinan in the bottom frame, but the Fielders as a whole struggled at the plate against Red Sox's Jerald Cabrera.

The Red Sox went on to add a pair of runs in both the fourth and sixth innings as they cruised to the easy win. Roke Tenorio bagged an RBI single in the fourth as did Sakisat in the sixth frame.

The Fielders last run came in the bottom of the fourth off an RBI single by Pangelinan that scored Ton Agulto.

Winning pitcher Cabrera went all six and gave up two earned runs off six hits and a walk with four strikeouts.

Falcons 19, Red Sox 14

The Falcons broke the ice with three runs off four hits in the opening frame, including a pair of RBI doubles by Juan Quitugua and Christopher Sablan, but the Red Sox fired back with five runs in the bottom portion off a two-RBI triple from Roke Tenorio, an RBI base rip by M.J. Sakisat, and a two-RBI single by Jose Tyginco.

The Falcons briefly tied it in the second, but the Red Sox erected a commanding 12-5 margin in the bottom frame primarily off errors. Jerald Cabrera knocked in a run, M.J. Sakisat bagged an RBI single, and Jhace Palacios a two-RBI base knock.

After a quiet third the Falcons moved around three runs in the fourth off a Sablan sacrifice fly and a two-RBI double by James Kintaro and made another big stand on defense to close the bottom half.

They then jumped in front, 15-12, in the fifth after Red Sox starter Palacios was called off the mound.

The Falcons scored two runs and kept the bases juiced for a another two-RBI double by Kintaro and an RBI smash by Franklin Lizama.

The Red Sox pulled within a run in the bottom frame with a two-RBI base rip by Reyes, but the Falcons racked up four more runs in the late innings and held strong for the win.

Ol'Aces 13, Enforcers 10

The Enforcers severed a 3-3 standstill from the first two innings with two runs in the bottom of the third frame off a pair of RBI base rips by Caleb Takao and Darrion Jones, but the Ol'Aces erupted with six runs in the top of the fourth off a two-RBI double by Peyton Lizama, a pair of RBI triples by Mike Muna, and Terson Eina linked via an RBI base poke from Kenji Yamagata.

The count then shifted to 11-10 still in favor of the Ol'Aces as the Enforcers postured up with five runs in the bottom of the fifth off four hits. Fred Congao and Jeffrey Dela Cruz both cracked RBI doubles.

The Ol'Aces tapped Jessie Brel to close the last two frames and he did so with little trouble.

His teammates went on to add a couple of insurance runs in the top of the seventh as well.

Ol'Aces' Muna batted 3-for-5 with four RBIs and a run. Enforcers' Takao went 3-for-4 with an RBI and a run

Jets 19, Lions 7

The Jets amassed a daunting 8-0 margin in the first two innings and hardly looked back.

K.J. Deleon Guerrero hammered an RBI triple to break the ice in the first inning and his teammates tacked in seven more in the second inning off four hits that followed some early walks.

Devyn Flores smashed a two-RBI double, Franco Nakamura bagged an RBI single, and Deleon Guerrero a two-RBI base rip.

After limiting its opponents to just one run at the start the third inning, the Lions' lone roar came in the bottom frame.

The pride was gifted with six runs from six walks and some errors, but were never able to get anything going besides that.

Both teams added a run in the fourth inning and the Jets breached the skyline with three runs in the fifth and another six in the sixth for the early decision.

Nakamura bashed a two-run inside-the-park homer in the fifth, while the Jets racked up seven hits as a unit in the final frame.

Nakamura batted 4-for-5 with four RBIs and two other runs.

Falcons 15, Lions 3

The Falcons led it, 5-3, after two innings with four runs in the second inning off a two-RBI single by Bradley Lieto and a two-run home run by Juan Quitugua.

They then added three more runs in the third off here hits. Christopher Sablan scored off a wild pitch and Quitugua bagged an RBI single.

Falcons second reliever Quitugua came to the mound to close the last out of the second inning and held down the fort through the middle innings. He shut down the pride for 3 2/3 innings and then handed it off to closer Alfonso Evangelista.

At the plate, the Falcons sprinkled a run in the fifth and sixth frames before slamming the door with a handful of runs in last inning of regulation.

Joseph Lifoifoi bagged an RBI single in the fifth, Quitugua blasted a triple and stole home in the sixth and Drek Noag highlighted the seventh with a two-RBI triple.

Quitugua batted 3-for-4 with three RBIs, two other runs, a stolen base, and a base on balls.

Falcons pitching foursome Naog, Lifoifoi, Quitugua, and Evangelista each gave up zero hits in the game.

THEA

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after surprisingly getting a challenge from 15-and-under girls champion Mikayla Lopez, 6-1, 7-5. She got a bye in the first round.

Thecel, meanwhile, upended Amy Arenovski, 6-1, 6-0, in the opening round before entering the championship round with a walkover win over Melody Johnson.

An undefeated 3-0 win-loss record catapulted Lopez to the championship of the girls 15-and-under division.

Lopez first made quick work of Adele Hudkins, 6-1, 6-0, in the opening round. She was more impressive in her second round assignment when she skunked Emily Jones, 6-0, 6-0.

She then got a bit of a challenge from fellow POJC campaigner Negahr Rastuguiy, 6-0, 6-3, to take the girls U15 tiara.

In the girls 12-and-under, Carol Lee outlasted Isabel Heras in a highly competitive finals, 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (7-1) to take home the championship.

Lee made it to the championship round following a 6-0, 6-1 semifinal win versus Liza Atalig. Before that, she hurdled Tania Tan, 6-0, 6-1, and had a bye in the first round.

After also getting a bye in the first round, Heras, for her part, defeated Grace Choi, 6-3, 6-3, and then barged into the finals with a 6-0, 6-0 win over Julia Ishikawa.

Malika Miyawaki dominated the girls 10-and-under division, losing only a grand total of three points in her run to the title.

She got a bye in the first round and then had a relatively easy 8-1 victory over Asia Raulerson.

Miyawaki then took the championship with a clinical 8-1 win over Catherine Atalig.

Atalig earned a spot in the finals with an 8-3 victory over Conatsu Kaga. She earlier beat Coume Kaga, 8-1, in the first round.

Results of the boys and girls doubles will be published in the *Saipan Tribune* later this week.

The 2012 CNMI Junior Tennis Championships was organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association with Angelo Jones serving as tournament director.

The top finishers in the season-ending youth tourney will get ranking points. These points will be compiled by NMITA and will help determine the CNMI's representatives to the 2012 North Pacific Qualifying Tournament in Guam in June.

The Top 5 players in the ranking list in the U15 and U12 age groups and Top 4 in the U18 will earn slots on the team.

SAIPAN

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onship this weekend, especially with very skilled and seasoned players from South Korea joining the tourney.

"Saipan won the last installment of the goodwill tournament, but this time around Saipan will be very hard pressed to retain any of the awards it took the last time," he said.

Lim added he has his money on the team from KTTA to ultimately bring home the bacon in this weekend's Goodwill tourney.

"We are happy that guest teams from South Korea and Guam have accepted our invitation and will participate. There are returning players from the Korean teams that joined back in 2010, and knowing this, I would have to say that the Korean teams and players are the favorites to win the team and individual honors," he added.

The longtime MATTA president, who is now based in Guam, however said more than competition, it's the opportunity to play the sport all of them love that brings players from the region together.

"Every year we hold the tournament in the spirit of camaraderie that it was originally created for, so just as in every time we organize it, the primary objective of the Goodwill tournament is to allow the participants to have as much fun as they can in the sport of table tennis. This sentiment I believe is shared by all the participating teams, which allows the event to achieve its simple objective," said Lim.

DIZON

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winner Gerald Rangamar finished 29th in 4:35:47 ahead of Jerome Diyao (4:49:25), Zackariah Hofschneider (5:25:10), and James Manglona (5:37:13).

Remarkably, the 45-and-over class turned in a number of strong performances as nine of the 14 riders that made up the field finished in the Top 15 overall and 42 of the 43 total participants made it to the finish line.

The course was basically set up as a lap around the island that started and ended at Suicide Cliff. The riders started out at 5:36am that morning and traveled north from the landmark and continued along coastline. The course then went eastward and south until it worked its way around. As it entered the final leg of the circle, the path eventually ran northwest through the San Jose Fiesta grounds as it went back toward the cliff.

The open division first place winners each received a $200 cash prize provided by the Tinian Mayor's Office and all other division winners were awarded $100 cash prizes. All second placers were presented with new cell phones compliments of Docomo Pacific, except for the 16-25 division runner-up who received a new phone from IT&E.

Other sponsors included Mobil, Budweiser, and the Biker's Association of Tinian.

2012 Escape from Managaha

PHOTOS By MARK RABAGO

Saipan Swim Club senior swimmer Victoria Chentsova topped last Saturday's 9th Annual Escape from Managaha with a time of 38:09.10.

Last year's winner Kento Akimaru tells KSPN news director Bob Coldeen that he saw turtles during the early part of the channel crossing.

SSC assistant coach Gary de Guzman escorted SSC's youngest swimmers in the 2.4-kilometer open water swim.

A total of 12 kayakers volunteered to make the swimmers' passage from Managaha Island to American Memorial Park's Micro Beach safe.

SSC head coach Mike Villagomez and assistant coach Mieko Carey are all smiles after escorting the club's youngest swimmers to shore.

Six-year-old Taiyo Akimaru tied Jinnosuke Suzuki as the youngest participants of this year's Escape.

SSC head coach Mike Villagomez poses with daughter Keanna and sons Michael and Mikhail after the Escape.

Three generations of Pierces—Carolyn, Jenniffer, and R.J.—completed the Escape together.

SSC's youngest swimmers take a break from the early morning channel crossing by playing on the sand.

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Falcons pick up two wins in Juniors

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Natibu Sports Association-Talaabwogh Falcons (5-4) bagged a pair of much needed victories with just five games left in the playoff race as Saipan Little League's Junior Division regular season winded down over the weekend at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The Hawaiya Technologies, Inc.-Ol'Aces remain at the helm with a 9-1 win-loss card and played the fourth place Saipan Shipping Company-Jets (5-5) last night. However details of that match will be released later in the week.

Second-ranked Bank of Saipan Red Sox (8-3) dropped two of three matches since the big upset, but are still riding comfortably in shotgun, while Ol'Aces bounced back from its lone loss to the Red Sox with a 13-10 victory over the DPS-Dare Program-Leep Enforcers (4-6) on Saturday

The Red Sox rebounded from a 14-19 loss to the Falcons last Saturday with a 13-3 run-rule victory over the IT&E Fielders (4-7) on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Falcons' other win came against the Division of Youth Services-Rep. Ramon S. Basa-Frederick P. DL Guerrero-Kagman Lions (0-10), 15-3, back on Thursday, and the Jets dropped the Lions, 19-7, on Saturday.

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Bank of Saipan-Red Sox pitcher Jerald Cabrera tries to pick off a runner at first base in Sunday's Junior League matchup against the IT&E Fielders at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.
WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Thea wins 4th straight girls U18 title

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Thea Minor matched Kana Aikawa's four straight CNMI Junior Tennis Championships girls 18-and-under singles championships last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

The 16-year-old Saipan Southern High School student accomplished the feat after beating older sister Thecel in the finals, 6-0, 6-0.

With two years more of eligibility left, the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships veteran said it would be quite an accomplishment to win six straight CNMI Junior Tennis Championships.

Thea advanced to the finals

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MARK RABAGO
Thea Minor, left, poses with older sister Thecel while holding her championship trophy and the perpetual trophy after winning a fourth straight CNMI Junior Tennis Championships girls 18-and-under singles title last Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Dizon wins 2012 Tinian Fiesta Bike Race

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nep Dizon won the open division of the 2012 Tinian Fiesta Bike Race last Saturday after completing the 65-kilometer course that started and ended at Suicide Cliff in 2:38:33.

Dizon's course time marked the fastest out of the 43 total competitors. Division runner-up Lewie Tenorio (2:42:48) finished just under five minutes later in front of eight other open division riders.

Less than a minute and a half in front of Tenorio came 36-44 age division's Bob Ferrer (2:41:28) with the second fastest time of the day, while 45 and-over's Rolando Campas crossed the line fourth overall in 2:45:28.

Meanwhile, women's open winner Joann Salazar finished 21st overall, but her mark of 4:09:42 easily eclipsed runner-up Rosalina Lazaro (5:50:44) and third placer Marjorie Cabay (5:51:13) by almost two hours.

Salazar also still got to show a foursome of younger classmen what was up as 16-24 division

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Saipan to host goodwill ping-pong tourney anew

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association will be hosting the 17th Goodwill Table Tennis Tournament this coming Saturday, May 12, at Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

According to tournament coordinator Budhi Gurung, the biannual competition will kick off at 9am and will conclude at 8pm.

Like always, the Goodwill tourney starts with a team format with players from host Saipan, Tinian, and from the Korea Table Tennis Association taking on each other in round-robin play with the first team to win three games declared the winner of the series.

After team play, the doubles competition will be up next which will be a best-of-three affair. The players with most wins in the team and doubles format will be declared singles champion.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants of last year's 16th Goodwill Table Tennis Tournament pose for a group photo during their awards ceremony at Canton Restaurant.

An awards ceremony at the Saipan World Resort will conclude the Goodwill tourney.

The Saipan team will be made up of Budhi Gurung, MATTA president Steve Lim, Jean Shi, and Shi's son David.

Tinian, meanwhile, will be led by Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino vice president Liang Wei Bin, former Saipan player Su Yong Dong, Charlie Chen, and Robin Lu.

Liang and company are still smarting from the loss of one of their top players, Luke Lu, who left Tinian for good three months ago.

The team from Guam, meanwhile, will be spearheaded by old reliable Hisamitsu Hamamoto, while the KTTA will be represented by eight strong players.

The last time the Goodwill tourney was held, the Saipan team swept the team, doubles, and singles competitions following years of domination from Tinian.

But Lim said Saipan will have difficulty retaining the champi-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
Nep Dizon, left, and Joann Salazar came away as the Tinian Fiesta Bike Race's male and female open division winners after the conclusion of Saturday's 65-kilometer race, which started and ended at Suicide Cliff.